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ABSTRACTS

Political Ideas

Aliaksiej Lastoŭski. Russo-Centrism as an Ideological Project of Belarusian Identity

The article analyses the main features and ideas of russo-centrism as an intellectual project of Belarusian identity since establishing an independent state. It deals with genesis, intellectual and political sources, evolution and main proponents, relations with other projects, representations of the past, present and future of the Belarusian nation which are offered by this project.

Keywords: Russo-Centrism, West-Rusism, Nationalism, Belarusian Identity, Intellectual History.

Andrej Kazakievič. Concepts (Ideas) of the Belarusian Nation since Gaining Independence (1990-2009)

The article investigates the main concepts of the Belarusian nation that have been shaped and articulated in Belarusian intellectual and political domains in 1990–2009 in the context of history of political ideas. The publication resulted from the study of several hundred books, articles and political documents. The differences and main trends in understanding of the Belarusian nation and public institutions that should shape it are demonstrated. Brief history, intellectual background and general characteristics of each trend are described.

Keywords: History of Ideas, Belarusian Nation, Nation-Building, Intellectual History, Identity.

Alieh Dziarnovič. Social Thought in 1960s – 1970s' Belarus: History, Nation and Independence

The article draws attention to the fact that it is impossible to understand the evolution of the Belarusian society during the second half of the 20th century merely from the standpoint of political history. As it turns out, in the stability times of the Soviet regime, in the 1960s – 1970s, a vibrant public discourse existed in Belarus. In the mid-1960s, there was a previously (and later) unprecedented public historiographical debate on history of culture and on genesis of Belarusian culture in late medieval and early modern times. In the 1970s, these discussions will no longer be possible. Therefore, the polemical public opinion has to flee to the "samizdat". In 1975-1976, in samizdat publication

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"Hutarki" ("Conversations"), Mikola Jermalovič formulated the concept of independence of Belarus.

Keywords: Social Thought, Political Ideas, "Samizdat", Independence Concept.

Siarhiej Bohdan. The National Democratic Project in Belarusian Politics in 1980s–1990s: Zianon Paźniak's Version

The article investigates internal politics issues in the National Democratic project through the ideas of the most prominent representative from this faction of Belarusian politics – Belarusian People's Front's leader Zianon Paźniak – in the late 1980s and early 1990s, i. e. in the time of his most intensive political activities in the country. It attempts to outline the structure of this part of the project, as well as identifies main contents and priorities of the project. The special focus is made on the key concept of "National Revival" and its content ambiguity.

Keywords: Belarusian Politics, Zianon Paźniak, Belarusian People's Front, National Democratic Movement, Nationalism.

Iryna Michiejeva. "Kryvija" and "Zadruga" as Cultural and Political Horizons of National Rebirth Projects of Belarus and Poland: Experience of Comparative Analysis

The article deals with a comparative analysis of philosophical and political projects of Belarusian (Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski) and Polish (Jan Stachniuk) national renascence. Based on theoretical reconstruction of problem and content fields of both concepts – "Kryvič Renascence" and "Slavic Pan-Humanism" – the article reveals similarities and differences in the authors' interpretations of the essence of national culture, specifics of its development stages, and prospects for realization of historic mission of the Belarusian and Polish peoples.

Keywords: National and Cultural Renascence, Ethnonational Identity, Belarusian Nationalism, Panslavism, Neopaganism.

Institutions and Communities

Natallia Vasilievič. Study of Belarusian Elites: between Algebra and Geography

The article analyses the situation with studying Belarusian political elite since the late 1980s. Main authors and texts, logic, methodology and strategy of analysing the elite as an element of Belarusian political system are being considered. Special attention is paid to consideration of conclusions made by particular authors as well as genre variety of the texts.

Keywords: Political Elite, Belarusian Political Elite, Belarusian Politics, Belarusian Political Science.

Iryna Lašuk and Aksana Šeliest. The Symbolic and Communicative Dimensions of the Linguistic Practices of the Belarusian Poles

The article considers the role of the Polish language as one of the basics for constructing ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles, the factors of choosing the native language as a specific symbolic act and the influence of this choice on other aspects of the contents of the group identity. A special attention is paid to the analysis of the use of Polish, Belarusian and Russian in the real communicative practices of the Belarusian Poles, orientations for preservation and translation of the Polish language as one of the mechanisms for saving identity and cultural peculiarity of the given community.

Keywords: Belarusian Poles, Ethnic Identity, Language, Language Practices, Diglossia.

Michail Niadzviecki. The Level of Web Activism of the Candidates during the Local Elections 2010 (Minsk City)

The article analyses the web activity of registered candidates in Minsk during local elections in 2010. In particular, it focuses on the level of representation of candidates via social networking. It also investigates the age structure differences, differences in the Internet activity and distribution of organizational affiliation. In addition, the summary of content analysis of social networks accounts of the candidates is included.

Keywords: Local Elections, Local Elections in 2010, Minsk, Web Activity, Web Campaigns, Internet, Social Networks.

Foreign Policy and Security Studies

Dzianis Mieljancoŭ. Defence Systems in Lithuania and Belarus: Comparative Perspective

The article compares the evolutions of the defence systems of Lithuania and Belarus after both countries became independent. While Lithuania switched to the concept of expeditionary forces, the Belarusian authorities still resort to the old concept of deterrence and complete territorial defence. Despite the Military Forces' modernization, in the near future Belarus will inevitably face the need in changing its attitude towards security and Military Forces' structure. Here, Lithuania's experience will be quite helpful.

Keywords: Security, Military Forces, Military Reform, Defence Concept, Lithuania, Belarus.

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Andrej Jahoraŭ. Who Has Benefited from the Implementation of the Neighbourhood Policy in Belarus?

The article represents the analysis of European Union foreign policy in relation to Belarus from the time it gained independence. The author considers the formal frameworks and genetic changes of EU policy, its main challenges and contradictions, as well as the effects and the results of such foreign policy approaches. The Belarusian issue in EU Eastern policy is formulated as a contradiction between the aims to achieve stability and prosperity of the neighbouring countries and the issues of their democratization. Ineffectiveness of the democratization policy is also explained by the absence of corresponding, matching the situation strategies of EU towards Belarus. A paradoxical conclusion of such situation is that the main beneficiary of the European assistance is the Belarusian authorities rather than the democratic community.

Keywords: European Union, EU Eastern Policy, Eastern Partnership, Democratization, Belarus.

Reviews

Aliaksiej Lastoŭski. Crisis of Belarusian Studies.

Bekus, Nelly (2010). Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative "Belarusianness". Budapest, Central European University

The article reviews the monograph by the Polish-Belarusian sociologist Nelly Bekus on social, political and cultural changes in independent Belarus in the context of nation-state building and national identity formation.

Keywords: Post-Communist Transformation, Democratization, Nationalism, National Identity, Politics of Identity.

Uladzislaŭ Ivanoŭ. Belarus, Mechanics of a Dictatorship.

Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature. Paris, L'Harmattan

In the book by J.-C. Lallemand and V. Symaniec, Belarus is described as a classical dictatorship which allegedly preserves the socialist and Soviet order, loyalty to the Soviet idea of building an egalitarian society, but which has long ago been penetrated by tough mechanisms of capitalism. These mechanisms are destroying not only the economy but also national and linguistic specificity of Belarus. The authors describe the foundations of modern dictatorship within Belarus, consistently giving an important role to geopolitical

component and domestic processes caused by the absence of civil society. The book combines both analytical and publicist texts, which makes it accessible to all readers.

Keywords: Belarusian Politics, Dictatorship, Lukashenka (Lukašenka), Authoritarianism, Democracy.

Siarhiej Liubimaŭ. Urban Studies and the Issue of Innovations.

Постсоветские столицы: Минск, Вильнюс, Баку (2009). Под общей редакцией Й. Терборна. Минск, Издательский центр БГУ

The article reviews the book on post-Soviet capitals – Minsk, Vilnius, and Baku, focused on comparative research of three former Soviet capitals. It analyses the authors' goals and tasks, and their success in conducting a consistent analysis of social and political phenomenon of the capital in the post-Soviet conditions.

Keywords: Urban Studies, Post-Soviet Capitals, Minsk, Vilnius, Baku.

Andžej Pukšto. Gente Lithuana, Natione Lithuana

Dariusz, Szpoper (2009). Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Arche. Gdańsk.

Review of the book on life, political and cultural activities of Konstancja Skirmuntt authored by the famous Polish scholar D. Szpoper.

Keywords: Konstancja Skirmuntt, "Krajoŭcy", Lithuanian National Movement, Belarusian National Movement.

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ЗМЕСТ

Палітычныя ідэі

Аляксей Ластоўскі. Русацэнтрызм як ідэалагічны праект беларускай ідэнтычнасці

Артыкул прысвечаны аналізу асноўных уласцівасцяў ды ідэй русацэнтрызму як інтэлектуальнага праекта беларускай ідэнтычнасці пасля стварэння незалежнай дзяржавы. Разглядаюцца генезіс, інтэлектуальныя і палітычныя крыніцы, эвалюцыя русацэнтрызму ў інтэлектуальнай і медыйнай прасторы Беларусі. Асаблівая ўвага надаецца інстытуцыйнаму афармленню, суадносінам з іншымі кірункамі думкі. Падрабязна аналізуюцца ўяўленні пра мінулае, сучаснасць і будучыню беларускай (рускай) нацыі ў межах русацэнтрызму.

Ключавая словы: русацэнтрызм, заходнерусізм, нацыяналізм, беларуская ідэнтычнасць, інтэлектуальная гісторыя.

Андрэй Казакевіч. Канцэпцыі (ідэі) беларускай нацыі ў перыяд незалежнасці, 1990–2009 гг.

Артыкул у кантэксце гісторыі палітычных ідэй разглядае асноўныя канцэпцыі беларускай нацыі, якія сфарміраваліся і функцыянавалі ў беларускім інтэлектуальным і палітычным полі з 1990 да 2009 гг. Тэкст складзены на аснове даследавання, якое ўключала ў сябе аналіз некалькіх сотняў тэкстаў, апублікаваных у выглядзе манаграфіяў, артыкулаў і палітычных праграм. Дэманструецца розніца і асноўныя кірункі ў разуменні таго, на якой аснове мусіць функцыянаваць беларуская нацыя, і якія публічныя інстытуты мусяць структурыраваць нацыянальную супольнасць. Падаецца кароткая гісторыя і характарыстыка кірункаў.

Ключавыя словы: ідэя нацыі, беларуская нацыя, нацыятварэнне, інтэлектуальная гісторыя, гісторыя ідэяў.

Алег Дзярновіч. Грамадская думка ў Беларусі 1960-х–1970-х гг.: гісторыя, нацыя і незалежнасць

У сваім артыкуле аўтар звяртае ўвагу на тое, што толькі з пазіцый палітычнай гісторыі немагчыма зразумець эвалюцыю беларускага грамадства на працягу другой паловы XX ст. Як высвятляецца, у эпоху

савецкай стабільнасці, у 1960–1970-х гг., у Беларусі пульсавала грамадская думка. Сярэдзіна 1960-х гг. адзначана нечуванай раней (і пазней) публічнай гістарыяграфічнай дыскусіяй па праблемах гісторыі культуры і культурагенезу познесярэдневечнай і раннемадэрнай Беларусі. У 1970-х гг. падобныя дыскусіі сталі немагчымыя. Таму палемічная грамадская думка стала перацякаць на старонкі самвыдату. А ў самвыдатаўскіх "Гутарках" Міколы Ермаловіча ў 1975–1976 гг. быў сфармуляваны канцэпт незалежнасці Беларусі.

Ключавыя словы: грамадская думка, палітычныя ідэі, самвыдат, канцэпт незалежнасці, дысідэнцкі рух.

Сяргей Богдан. Нацыянальна-дэмакратычны праект беларускай палітыкі па версіі Зянона Пазьняка, 1987–1995 гг.

У артыкуле разглядаюцца ўнутрыпалітычныя аспекты нацыянал-дэмакратычнага праекта на прыкладзе ідэяў самага яркага прадстаўніка гэтай плыні беларускай палітыкі – кіраўніка Беларускага народнага фронта Зянона Пазьняка. Асноўная ўвага надаецца тэкстам канца 1980-х і першай паловы 1990-х гг. – часу актыўнай палітычнай дзейнасці Пазьняка ў Беларусі. Робіцца спроба прадставіць структуру, а таксама вылучыць асноўныя кірункі і прыярытэты для беларускай палітыкі. Асаблівая ўвага надаецца ключавому панятку нацыянальнага «Адраджэння» і яго змястоўнай неадназначнасці.

Ключавыя словы: беларуская палітыка, Зянон Пазьняк, Беларускі народны фронт, нацыянал-дэмакратычны рух, палітычны праект, нацыяналізм.

Ірына Міхеева. «Крывія» і «Zadruga» як культурна-палітычныя гарызонты нацыянальна-адраджэнскіх праектаў Беларусі ды Польшчы: досвед параўнальнага аналізу

Артыкул прысвечаны параўнальнаму аналізу інтэлектуальных праектаў беларускага (Вацлаў Ластоўскі) і польскага (Ян Стахнюк) нацыянальнага адраджэння. На падставе тэарэтычнай рэканструкцыі праблемна-зместавага поля абедзвюх канцэпцый – «крывіцкага адраджэння» і «славянскага пангуманізму» – робяцца высновы пра падабенства і адрозненне ў аўтарскіх інтэрпрэтацыях сутнасці нацыянальнай культуры, спецыфікі этапаў яе развіцця, перспектыў рэалізацыі гістарычнай місіі беларускага і польскага народаў.

Ключавыя словы: нацыянальнае і культурнае адраджэнне, этнанацыянальная ідэнтычнасць, нацыяналізм, беларускі нацыяналізм, панславізм, неапаганства.

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Інстытуты і супольнасці

Наталля Васілевіч. Даследаванне беларускіх эліт: паміж алгебрай і геаграфіяй

Артыкул аналізуе стан даследаванняў беларускай палітычнай эліты з канца 1980-х гг. Разглядаюцца асноўныя аўтары і тэксты, логіка, метады і стратэгіі аналізу эліты як элемента палітычнай сістэмы Беларусі. Асобная ўвага надаецца разгляду высноў асобных аўтараў, а таксама жанравай разнастайнасці тэкстаў.

Ключавыя словы: палітычная эліта, беларуская палітычная эліта, беларуская палітыка, беларуская паліталогія.

Ірына Лашук і Аксана Шэлест. Сімвалічнае і камунікатыўнае вымярэнне моўных практык беларускіх палякаў

У артыкуле разглядаецца роля польскай мовы як адной з падстаў канструявання этнічнай ідэнтычнасці беларускіх палякаў, фактары выбару роднай мовы як спецыфічнага сімвалічнага акту і ўплыў гэтага выбару на іншыя аспекты зместу групавой ідэнтычнасці. Асаблівая ўвага нададзена аналізу выкарыстання польскай, беларускай і рускай мовы ў рэальных камунікатыўных практыках беларускіх палякаў, установак на захаванне і трансляцыю польскай мовы як аднаго з механізмаў захавання ідэнтычнасці і культурнай своеасаблівасці дадзенай супольнасці.

Ключавыя словы: беларускія палякі, этнічная ідэнтычнасць, мова, моўныя практыкі, дыгласія.

Міхаіл Нядзвецкі. Узровень вэб-актыўнасці кандыдатаў на мясцовых выбарах 2010 г. (Мінск)

У артыкуле аналізуецца стан вэб-актыўнасці падчас мясцовых выбараў 2010 г. у Мінску сярод зарэгістраваных кандыдатаў у дэпутаты. У прыватнасці, вывучаецца ўзровень рэпрэзентацыі кандыдатаў праз сацыяльныя сеткі, блогавыя сістэмы і персанальныя сайты. Таксама даследуюцца адрозненні ва ўзроставай структуры; у формах інтэрнэт-актыўнасці; у размеркаванні па арганізацыйнай прыналежнасці. У Дадатку прыводзяцца зводныя дадзеныя па кантэнт-аналізе акаўнтаў у сацыяльных сетках кандыдатаў у дэпутаты.

Ключавыя словы: мясцовыя выбары – 2010 г., Мінск, вэб-актыўнасць, вэб-кампаніі, Інтэрнэт, сацыяльныя сеткі.

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Знешняя палітыка і даследаванні бяспекі

Дзяніс Мельянцоў. Абарончыя сістэмы Літвы і Беларусі: параўнальны аналіз

У артыкуле параўноўваюцца эвалюцыі абарончых сістэм Літвы і Беларусі пасля атрымання незалежнасці абедзвюма краінамі. У той час як Літва перайшла да канцэпцыі экспедыцыйных узброеных сіл, беларускае кіраўніцтва засталося верным канцэпцыі стрымлівання і ўсёабдымнай тэрытарыяльнай абароны. Нягледзячы на мадэрнізацыю ўзброеных сіл, Беларусь у будучыні непазбежна сутыкнецца з праблемай змены падыходу да бяспекі і структуры ўзброеных сіл. Досвед Літвы ў такім выпадку будзе мець вялікую карысць.

Ключавыя словы: бяспека, узброеныя сілы, войска, вайсковая рэформа, абарончая канцэпцыя, Літва, Беларусь.

Андрэй Ягораў. Хто ў Беларусі атрымлівае перавагі ад палітыкі суседства?

Артыкул прадстаўляе аналіз знешняй палітыкі Еўрапейскага Саюза у дачыненні Беларусі ад пачатку яе незалежнасці. Аўтарам разглядаюцца фармальныя рамкі і генетычныя змены палітыкі ЕС, яе асноўныя выклікі і супярэчанні, а таксама эфекты і вынікі такіх знешнепалітычных захадаў. Беларуская праблема ва ўсходняй палітыцы ЕС фармулюецца як супярэчанне паміж мэтамі дасягнення стабільнасці і дабрабыту краін-суседзяў і пытаннямі дэмакратызацыі. Неэфектыўнасць палітыкі дэмакратызацыі тлумачыцца ў тым ліку і адсутнасцю адпаведных сітуацыі стратэгій ЕС у дачыненні да Беларусі. Парадаксальным вынікам такога стану з'яўляецца тое, што асноўным бенефіціярам еўрапейскай дапамогі з'яўляюцца беларускія аўтарытарныя ўлады, а не дэмакратычная супольнасць.

Ключавыя словы: Еўрапейскі Саюз, усходняя палітыка ЕС, Усходняе парнерства, дэмакратызацыя, Беларусь.

Рэцэнзіі

Аляксей Ластоўскі. Крызіс веды пра Беларусь.

Bekus, Nelly (2010). Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative «Belarusianness»

У рэцэнзіі разглядаецца манаграфія сацыёлага Нэлі Бекус, прысвечаная аналізу сацыяльна-палітычных і культурных змен у незалежнай Беларусі

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на фоне працэсаў будаўніцтва дзяржаўнасці і развіцця нацыянальнай ідэнтычнасці.

Ключавыя словы: посткамуністычныя трансфармацыі, дэмакратызацыя, нацыяналізм, нацыянальная ідэнтычнасць, палітыка ідэнтычнасці.

Уладзіслаў Іваноў. Беларусь, спружыны адной дыктатуры.

Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature. Paris, L'Harmattan

У сваёй кнізе Ж.-Ш. Ляльман і В. Шыманец апісваюць Беларусь як класічную дыктатуру, якая дэкларуе захаванне сацыялістычнага і савецкага парадку, адданасць савецкай ідэі пабудовы эгалітарнага грамадства, але ў якую даўно пранiклі жорсткія механізмы капіталізму. Гэтыя механізмы разбураюць не толькі эканоміку, але і нацыянальную ды моўную спецыфіку Беларусі. Аўтары паслядоўна апісваюць спружыны сучаснай дыктатуры ў межах Беларусі, надаючы важнае месца геапалітычнаму чынніку, а таксама ўнутраным працэсам, звязаным з адсутнасцю грамадзянскай супольнасці. Кніга ўключае ў сябе як выключна аналітычныя тэксты, так і публіцыстычныя, што робіць яе даступнай для усіх чытацкіх колаў.

Ключавыя словы: беларуская палітыка, дыктатура, Лукашэнка, аўтарытарызм, дэмакратыя.

Сяргей Любімаў. Urban studies і праблема інавацый.

Постсоветские столицы: Минск, Вильнюс, Баку (2009). Под общей редакцией Й.Терборна, Минск, Издательский центр БГУ

У рэцэнзіі разглядаецца кніга «Постсоветские столицы...», прысвечаная параўнальнаму даследаванню трох постсавецкіх сталіц – Мінска, Вільні, Баку. Аналізуюцца мэты і задачы аўтараў, а таксама ступень іх паспяховасці у правядзенні паслядоўнага разгляду сацыяльнага і палітычнага феномена сталіцы ў постсавецкіх умовах.

Ключавыя словы: гарадскія даследаванні, постсавецкія сталіцы, Мінск, Вільня, Баку.

Анджэй Пукшта. Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana.

Dariusz, Szpoper (2009). Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Gdańsk, Arcxhe.

Рэцэнзія на кнігу вядомага польскага даследчыка Д. Шпопэра, якая прысвечана жыццю, культурнай і палітычнай дзейнасці Канстанцыі Скірмунт.

Ключавыя словы: Канстанцыя Скірмунт, «краёўцы», краёвая ідэя, літоўскі нацыянальны рух, беларускі нацыянальны рух.

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СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

Политические идеи

Алексей Ластовский. Русоцентризм как идеологический проект беларуской идентичности

Статья посвящена анализу основных свойств и идей русоцентризма как интеллектуального проекта беларуской идентичности после создания независимого государства. Рассматриваются генезис, интеллектуальные и политические источники, эволюция русоцентризма в интеллектуальном и медийном пространстве Беларуси. Особое внимание уделено институциональному оформлению, соотношениям с другими направлениями мысли. Подробно анализируются представления о прошлом, настоящем и будущем беларуской (русской) нации в рамках русоцентризма.

Ключевые слова: русоцентризм, западнорусизм, национализм, беларуская идентичность, интеллектуальная история.

Андрей Казакевич. Концепции (идеи) беларуской нации в период независимости, 1990–2009 гг.

Статья в контексте истории политических идей рассматривает основные концепции беларуской нации, которые сформировались и функционировали в беларуском интеллектуальном и политическом поле с 1990 по 2009 гг. Текст составлен на основе исследования, которое включало в себя анализ нескольких сотен текстов, изданных в виде монографий, статей и политических программ. Продемонстрирована разница и основные направления в понимании того, на какой основе должна функционировать беларуская нация, и какие публичные институты должны структурировать национальное сообщество. Преподносится краткая история и характеристика направлений.

Ключевые слова: идея нации, беларуская нация, национальное строительство, интеллектуальная история, история идей.

Олег Дернович. Общественная мысль в Беларуси 1960-х–1970-х гг.: история, нация и независимость

В своей статье автор обращает внимание на то, что только с позиций политической истории невозможно понять эволюцию беларуского общества в течение второй половины XX в. Как выясняется, в эпоху советской стабильности, в 1960–1970-х гг., в Беларуси пульсировало

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общественное мнение. Середина 1960-х гг. отмечена неслыханной ранее (и позднее) публичной историографической дискуссией по проблемам истории культуры и культурогенеза позднесредневековой и раннемодерной Беларуси. В 1970-х гг. подобные дискуссии стали невозможны. Поэтому полемическое общественное мнение стало перетекать на страницы самиздата. А в самиздатовских «Разговорах» Миколы Ермоловича в 1975–1976 гг. был сформулирован концепт независимости Беларуси.

Ключевые слова: общественно-политическая мысль, политические идеи, самиздат, концепт независимости, диссидентское движение.

Сергей Богдан. Национально-демократический проект беларуской политики по версии Зенона Пазьняка, 1987–1995 гг.

В статье рассмотрены внутриполитические аспекты национал-демократического проекта на примере идей самого яркого представителя этого течения беларуской политики – руководителя Беларуского народного фронта Зенона Пазьняка. Основное внимание уделяется текстам конца 1980-х и первой половины 1990-х гг. – времени активной политической деятельности Пазьняка в Беларуси. Сделана попытка представить структуру, а также выделить основные направления и приоритеты для беларуской политики. Особое внимание уделяется ключевому понятию национального «Возрождения» и его содержательной неоднозначности.

Ключевые слова: беларуская политика, Зенон Позьняк, Беларуский народный фронт, национал-демократическое движение, политический проект, национализм.

Ирина Михеева. «Крывiя» и «Zadruga» как культурно-политические горизонты национально-возрожденческих проектов Беларуси и Польши: опыт сравнительного анализа

Статья посвящена сравнительному анализу интеллектуальных проектов беларуского (Вацлав Ластовский) и польского (Ян Стахнюк) национального возрождения. На основе теоретической реконструкции проблемно-содержательного поля обеих концепций – «кривичского возрождения» и «славянского пангуманизма» – делаются выводы о сходствах и различиях в авторских интерпретациях сущности национальной культуры, специфики этапов ее развития, перспектив реализации исторической миссии беларуского и польского народов.

Ключевые слова: национальное и культурное возрождение, этнонациональная идентичность, национализм, беларуский национализм, панславизм, неоязычество.

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Институты и сообщества

Наталья Василевич. Исследование беларуских элит: между алгеброй и географией

Статья анализирует состояние исследований беларуской политической элиты с конца 1980-х гг. Рассматриваются основные авторы и тексты, логика, методы и стратегии анализа элиты как элемента политической системы Беларуси. Отдельное внимание уделяется рассмотрению выводов отдельных авторов, а также жанровому разнообразию текстов.

Ключевые слова: политическая элита, беларуская политическая элита, беларуская политика, беларуская политология.

Ирина Лашук и Оксана Шелест. Символическое и коммуникативное измерение языковых практик беларуских поляков

В статье рассматривается роль польского языка как одного из оснований конструирования этнической идентичности беларуских поляков, факторы выбора родного языка как специфического символического акта и влияние этого выбора на другие аспекты содержания групповой идентичности. Особое внимание уделено анализу использования польского, беларуского и русского языков в реальных коммуникативных практиках беларуских поляков, установок на сохранение и трансляцию польского языка как одного из механизмов сохранения идентичности и культурного своеобразия данной общности.

Ключевые слова: беларуские поляки, этническая идентичность, язык, языковые практики, диглоссия.

Михаил Недвецкий. Уровень веб-активности кандидатов на местных выборах 2010 г. (Минск)

В статье анализируется состояние веб-активности во время местных выборов 2010 г. В Минске среди зарегистрированных кандидатов в депутаты. В частности, изучается уровень репрезентации кандидатов через социальные сети, блоговые системы и персональные сайты. Также исследуются отличия в возрастной структуре; в формах интернет-активности; в распределении по организационной принадлежности. В приложении приводятся сводные данные по контент-анализа аккаунтов в социальных сетях кандидатов в депутаты.

Ключевые слова: местные выборы – 2010 г., Минск, веб-активность, веб-кампании, Интернет.

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Внешняя политика и исследования безопасности

Денис Мельянцов. Оборонительные системы Литвы и Беларуси: сравнительный анализ

В статье сравниваются эволюции оборонительных систем Литвы и Беларуси после обретения независимости обеими странами. В то время как Литва перешла к концепции экспедиционных вооруженных сил, беларуское руководство осталось верным концепции сдерживания и всеобщей территориальной обороны. Несмотря на модернизацию вооруженных сил, Беларусь в будущем неизбежно столкнется с проблемой изменения подхода к безопасности и структуры вооруженных сил. И опыт Литвы в таком случае принесет огромную пользу.

Ключевые слова: безопасность, вооруженные силы, войска, военная реформа, оборонительная концепция, Литва, Беларусь.

Андрей Егоров. Кто в Беларуси получает выгоду от осуществления политики соседства?

Статья содержит анализ внешней политики Европейского Союза в отношении Беларуси с начала ее независимости. Автором рассматриваются формальные рамки и генетические изменения политики ЕС, ее основные вызовы и противоречия, а также эффекты и результаты таких внешнеполитических шагов. Беларуская проблема в восточной политике ЕС формулируется как противоречие между целями достижения стабильности и благополучия стран-соседей и вопросами демократизации. Неэффективность политики демократизации объясняется, в том числе, и отсутствием соответствующей стратегий ЕС в отношении Беларуси. Парадоксальным результатом такого состояния является то, что основным получателями европейской помощи являются беларуские авторитарные власти, а не демократическое сообщество.

Ключевые слова: Европейский Союз, восточная политика ЕС, Восточное партнерства, демократизация, Беларусь.

Рецензии

Алексей Ластовский. Кризис знания о Беларуси.

Bekus, Nelly (2010). Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative «Belarusianness»

В рецензии рассматривается монография социолога Нелли Бекус, посвященная анализу социально-политических и культурных изменений в независимой Беларуси на фоне процессов строительства государственности и развития национальной идентичности.

Ключевые слова: посткоммунистические преобразования, демократизация, национализм, национальная идентичность, политика идентичности.

Владислав Иванов. Беларусь, пружины одной диктатуры

Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature. Paris, L'Harmattan

В своей книге Ж.-Ш. Лельман и В. Шимонец описывают Беларусь как классическую диктатуру, которая декларирует сохранение социалистического и советского порядка, преданность советской идее построения эгалитарного общества, но в которую давно проникли жёсткие механизмы капитализма. Эти механизмы разрушают не только экономику, но и национальную и языковую специфику Беларуси. Авторы последовательно описывают пружины современной диктатуры в пределах Беларуси, уделяя значительное внимание геополитической составляющей, а также внутренним процессам, связанным с отсутствием гражданского общества. Книга включает в себя как исключительно аналитические, так и публицистические тексты, что делает её доступной для широкого круга читателей.

Ключевые слова: белорусская политика, диктатура, Лукашенко, авторитаризм, демократия.

Сергей Любимов. Urban studies и проблема инноваций

Постсоветские столицы: Минск, Вильнюс, Баку (2009). Под общей редакцией Й.Терборна. Минск, Издательский центр БГУ

В рецензии рассматривается книга «Постсоветские столицы…», посвящённая сравнительному исследованию трёх постсоветских столиц – Минска, Вильнюса, Баку. Анализируются цели и задачи авторов, а также степень успешности их попытки последовательного рассмотрения социального и политического феномена столицы в постсоветских условиях.

Ключевые слова: городские исследования, постсоветские столицы, Минск, Вильнюс, Баку.

Анджей Пукшто. Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana

Dariusz, Szpoper (2009). Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Arche, Gdańsk.

Рецензия на книгу известного польского исследователя Д. Шпопера, которая посвящена жизни, культурной и политической деятельности Констанции Скирмунт.

Ключевые слова: Констанция Скирмунт, «краёвцы», краёвая идея, литовское национальное движение, беларуское национальное движение.

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TURINYS

Politinės idėjos

Aleksėjus Lastovskis (Aliaksiej Lastoŭski). Ruso-centrizmas kaip ideologinis baltarusiško identiteto projektas

Straipsnyje analizuojami pagrindiniai vieno iš baltarusiškojo identiteto intelektualinių projektų –ruso-centrizmo – bruožai ir idėjos nuo to laiko kai buvo sukurta nepriklausoma valstybė. Diskutuojamas jo susiformavimas, intelektualiniai ir politiniai šaltiniai, evoliucija ir pagrindiniai propaguotojai, ryšiai su kitais projektais, praeities interpretacijos, bei projekto formuluojami baltarusių nacijos dabarties ir ateities vaizdiniai.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Ruso-centrizmas, Vakarų-rusizmas, nacionalizmas, baltarusiškasis identitetas, intelektualinė istorija.

Andrėjus Kazakevičius (Andrej Kazakievič). Baltarusių nacijos konceptai (idėjos) nuo nepriklausomybės iškovojimo laikų (1990-2009)

Straipsnyje analizuojami pagrindiniai baltarusių nacijos konceptai, kurie buvo sukurti ir artikuliuoti baltarusių intelektualinėse ir politinėse sferose 1990-2009 m. politinių idėjų istorijos kontekste. Rengiant studiją buvo pasitelkta keli šimtai knygų, straipsnių ir politinių dokumentų. Straipsnyje parodomi pagrindiniai skirtumai ir tendencijos, kurie padeda geriau suvokti baltarusių nacijos ir viešųjų institucijų kūrimąsi. Aprašoma kiekvienos tendencijos trumpa istorija, intelektualinis pamatas ir bendros charakteristikos.

Raktiniai žodžiai: idėjų istorija, baltarusių nacija, nacijos kūrimasis, intelektualinė istorija, identitetas.

Alehas Dziarnovičius (Alieh Dziarnovič). Socialinė mintis Baltarusijoje XX a. septintajame ir aštuntajame dešimtmečiuose: istorija, nacija ir nepriklausomybė

Straipsnyje atkreipiamas dėmesys į tai, jog Baltarusijos visuomenės vystymosi XX a. antrojoje pusėje neįmanoma suprasti žvelgiant tik per politinės istorijos prizmę. Aiškėja, kad brandaus sovietinio režimo laikais – XX a. septintajame ir aštuntajame dešimtmečiuose – Baltarusijoje vyko karštas visuomeninis diskursas. Septintojo dešimtmečio viduryje vyko iki tol (ir vėliau) nematyta vieša istoriografinė polemika apie kultūros istoriją ir baltarusių kultūros genezę vėlyvaisiais viduramžiais ir naujaisiais amžiais. Aštuntajame dešimtmetyje tokios diskusijos jau nebebuvo įmanomos. Dėl šios priežasties, viešos poleminės diskusijos turėjo pasitraukti į samizdat'ą. 1975-1976 m., samizdat'o publikacijoje „Hutarki" („Pokalbiai"), Mikola Jermalovičius suformulavo Baltarusijos nepriklausomybės idėją.

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Raktiniai žodžiai: Socialinė mintis, politinės idėjos, samizdat'as, nepriklausomybės idėja.

Serhėjus Bohdanas (Siarhiej Bohdan). Tautinės demokratijos projektas Baltarusijos politikoje XX a. devintajame ir dešimtajame dešimtmečiuose: Zenono Pazniako (Zianon Paźniak) versija

Straipsnyje analizuojami tautinės demokratijos projekto vidaus politikos klausimai per žymiausio šios Baltarusijos politikos krypties atstovo – Baltarusijos liaudies fronto lyderio Zenono Pazniako – idėjas, suformuluotas XX a. aštuntajame dešimtmetyje ir dešimtojo dešimtmečio pradžioje t.y. tais laikais, kai jis aktyviausiai veikė politiniame šalies gyvenime. Bandoma apibrėžti šio projekto struktūrą bei pagrindines turinio savybes ir prioritetus. Specialus dėmesys yra kreipimas į „tautinio atgimimo“ idėją ir jos turinio ambivalentiškumą.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Baltarusijos politika, Zenonas Pazniakas (Zianon Paźniak), Baltarusijos liaudies frontas, tautinės demokratijos judėjimas, nacionalizmas.

Iryna Michejeva. „Kryvija“ ir „Zadruga“ kaip kultūriniai ir politiniai nacionalinio atgimimo projekto horizontai Baltarusijoje ir Lenkijoje: lyginamosios analizės patyrimas

Straipsnyje atliekama lyginamoji filosofinė ir politinė Baltarusijos (Vaclavas Lastovskis – Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski) ir Lenkijos (Janas Stačniukas – Jan Stachniuk) tautinio atgimimo projektų analizė. Pasiremiant abiejų konceptų – „krivičių renesanso“ ir „slavų Pan-humanizmo“ – teorine problemos ir turinio rekonstrukcija, straipsnio autorė analizuoja interpretacijų panašumus ir skirtumus, tautinės baltarusių ir lenkų kultūros, jos vystymosi stadijų specifikos ir istorinės misijos realizacijos perspektyvos temomis.

Raktiniai žodžiai: tautinis ir kultūrinis renesansas, etnonacionalinė idėja, baltarusių nacionalizmas, Panslavizmas, naujieji pagonys.

Institucijos ir bendruomenės

Natallia Vasilievič. Baltarusijos elitų tyrimas: tarp algebros ir geometrijos

Straipsnyje analizuojama Baltarusijos politinio elito tyrimų situacija nuo XX a. devintojo dešimtmečio pabaigos. Aptariami pagrindiniai autoriai bei analizuojami jų tekstų, skirtų elito kaip Baltarusijos politinės sistemos elemento, logika, metodologija ir strategija. Ypač didelis dėmesys kreipiamas į autorių daromas išvadas bei tekstų žanrinei įvairovei.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Politinis elitas, Baltarusijos politinis elitas, Baltarusijos politika, Baltarusijos politiniai mokslai.

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Iryna Lašuk ir Aksana Šeliest. Simbolinės ir komunikacinės Baltarusijos lenkų lingvistinės praktikos dimensijos

Straipsnyje analizuojamas lenkų kalbos veiksnys kaip vienas iš pagrindinių Baltarusijos lenkų etninio identiteto konstravimo elementų. Diskutuojamas gimtosios kalbos pasirinkimo faktorius kaip simbolinis aktas ir šio pasirinkimo įtaka grupinio identiteto turiniui. Specialus dėmesys skiriamas lenkų, baltarusių ir rusų kalbų vartojimo analizei kasdieniame Baltarusijos lenkų gyvenime. Aptariamas lenkų kalbos išsaugojimo ir vertimų klausimas kaip vienas iš šios bendruomenės identiteto ir kultūrinio savitumo išsaugojimo mechanizmų.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Baltarusijos lenkai, etninis identitetas, kalba, kalbos vartojimas, dvikalbystė.

Michailas Niadzvieckis (Michail Niadzviecki). Kandidatų internetinio aktyvumo lygmuo 2010 m. Minsko miesto vietos savivaldos rinkimų metu

Straipsnyje analizuojamas internetinis registruotų kandidatų aktyvumas Minsko savivaldos rinkimų metu 2010 m. Akcentuojama kandidatų reprezentacija socialiniuose tinkluose. Taip pat tiriami amžiaus struktūrų bei internetinio aktyvumo skirtumai ir organizacinių priklausomybių pasiskirstymai. Taip pat pateikimas kandidatų socialiniuose tinkluose pateiktos informacijos turinio apibendrinimas.

Raktiniai žodžiai: vietos rinkimai, vietos rinkimai 2010 m., Minskas, internetinis aktyvumas, interneto kampanijos, Internetas, socialiniai tinklai.

Užsienio politikos ir saugumo tyrimai

Dzenisas Meljancovas (Dzianis Mieljancoŭ). Gynybos sistemos Lietuvoje ir Baltarusijoje: komparatyvistinė perspektyva

Straipsnyje lyginamos Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos gynybos sistemos po to kai abi šalys tapo nepriklausomomis valstybėmis. Tuo tarpu kai Lietuva persiorientavo į ekspedicines pajėgas, Baltarusija vis dar laikosi seno atgrasymo ir visos teritorijos gynybos koncepto. Nepaisant karinių pajėgų modernizavimo, artimiausioje ateityje Baltarusija turės pakeisti savo požiūrį į saugumą ir karinių pajėgų struktūrą. Čia Lietuvos patyrimas bus labai naudingas.

Raktiniai žodžiai: saugumas, karinės pajėgos, karinė reforma, gynybos konceptai, Lietuva, Baltarusija.

Andrėjus Jahorovas (Andrej Jahoraŭ). Kas laimėjo dėl kaimynystės politikos įgyvendinimo Baltarusijoje?

Straipsnyje analizuojama Europos Sąjungos užsienio politika Baltarusijos atžvilgiu nuo to laiko, kai pastaroji tapo nepriklausoma. Autorius diskutuoja formalius tinklus ir genetinius ES politikos pokyčius, pagrindinius jos iššūkius ir prieštaravimus, taip pat ir tokios užsienio politikos pasekmes. Baltarusijos klausimas ES

Rytų politikoje yra formuluojamas prieštaravimų kontekste: iš vienos pusės siekiama kaimyninių kraštų stabilumo ir klestėjimo, iš kitos – jų demokratizacijos. Neefektyvi demokratizacijos politika dar gali būti paaiškinama ir tuo, jog Baltarusijos atžvilgiu nėra adekvačių, situaciją atitinkančių ES strategijų. Paradoksali tokios situacijos išvada yra ta, jog Europai vykdant tokią politiką pagrindinis laimėtojas yra Baltarusijos valdžia, o ne demokratinė bendruomenė.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Europos Sąjunga, ES Rytų politika, Rytų bendradarbiavimas, demokratizacija, Baltarusija.

Apžvalgos

Aleksėjus Lastovskis (Aliaksiej Lastoŭski). Baltarusijos studijų krizė.

Bekus, Nelly (2010). Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative «Belarusianness». Budapest, Central European University

Straipsnyje apžvelgiama lenkų-baltarusių sociologo Nelly Bekus monografija apie socialinius, politinius ir kultūrinius pokyčius nepriklausomos Baltarusijoje valstybės kūrimo ir tautinio identiteto formavimosi kontekste.

Raktiniai žodžiai: post-komunistinė transformacija, demokratizacija, nacionalizmas, nacionalinis identitetas, identiteto politika.

Vladzislavas Ivanovas (Uladzilaŭ Ivanoŭ). Baltarusija, diktatūros mechanika.

Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature. Paris, L'Harmattan

Šioje knygoje, kurios autoriais yra J.-C. Lallemand ir V. Symaniec, Baltarusija yra aprašoma kaip klasikinė diktatoriaus valdoma šalis, kuri tariamai puoselėja socialistinį ir sovietinį palikimą, bei lojalumą sovietinei idėjai sukurti egalitarinę visuomenę, tačiau į kurią jau senai yra prasiskverbę kapitalizmo mechanizmai. Šie mechanizmai griauna ne tik ekonomiką bet ir tautinį bei lingvistinį Baltarusijos savitumą. Autoriai aprašo Baltarusijos diktatūros priežastis, atkreipdami dėmesį į geopolitines aplinkybes ir vidaus procesus, nulemtus pilietinės visuomenės trūkumu. Knygoje yra derinami analitiniai ir žurnalistiniai tekstai, todėl ji yra prieinama plačiam skaitytojų ratui.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Baltarusijos politika, diktatūra, Lukašenka, autoritarizmas, demokratija.

Serhėjus Liubimavas (Siarhiej Liubimaŭ). Miesto studijos ir inovacijų klausimas.

Постсоветские столицы: Минск, Вильнюс, Баку (2009). Под общей редакцией Й.Терборна. Минск, Издательский центр БГУ

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Šiame straipsnyje apžvelgiama knyga apie po-sovietines sostines – Minską, Vilnių ir Baku, – kurioje remiamasi komparatyvistine trijų buvusių sovietinių sostinių analize. Analizuojami autorių tikslai ir rezultatai, atliekant nuoseklią po-sovietinių sostinių socialinio ir politinio fenomeno analizę.

Raktiniai žodžiai: miesto studijos, po-sovietinės sostinės, Minskas, Vilnius, Baku.

Andžej Pukšto. Gente Lithuana, Natione Lithuana

Dariusz, Szpoper (2009). Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Arche. Gdańsk.

Žinomo lenkų mokslininko D. Szpoperio knygos apie Konstancijos Skirmunt gyvenimą, kultūrines ir politines veiklas apžvalga.

Raktiniai žodžiai: Konstancija Skirmunt, Krajovcai, Lietuvos nacionalinis judėjimas, Baltarusijos nacionalinis judėjimas.

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POLITICAL IDEAS

Aliaksiej Lastoŭski[1]

RUSSO-CENTRISM AS AN IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT OF BELARUSIAN IDENTITY

General Characteristics

THIS WORK HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT UNDER RESEARCH "Projects of Nation and Identity. Belarus-Ukraine. 1990-2008" aiming at selection, description and analysis of the most representational projects of national identity existing in the public discourse of the Republic of Belarus.

In this case, we are talking about the projects of nation as some discursive integrities and consistencies of ideas about the essence of the Belarusian nation. Selection of the key nation projects rests upon two characteristics: a) availability of a systematic image of the past, present and future of Belarusians, where certain building blocks that possess semantic stability and reproducibility can be highlighted, and b) possibility of highlighting the discursive features that define the specificity and concreteness of the actual ideological project particularly as an intellectual construction.

Russo-centrism[2] stands out among the major versions of the Belarusian nation that have a direct impact on the political, cultural and intellectual life of the country. The ideological core of this project is considering Belarusians an integral part of the Russian people. The Russian people are understood as a super-ethnos uniting Great Russians, Little Russians (Ukrainians), and Belarusians (White Russians). For this super-ethnos, the unity of language and culture as well as commonality of values and mentality is distinctive. Briefly, this main prescription of russo-centrism can be formulated as follows: "*A Belarusian, like a Great Russian and a Ukrainian, is a Russian man by his theoretical and practical life; and Belarus, like Russia and Ukraine are parts of a unified all-Russian civilization*" (Kryštapovič, 1999: 134 -135).

This results in prescriptions for alliance with Russia as a major geopolitical object for Belarus. Slightly peripheral for this political project are references to the Slavic brotherhood and "Slavic civilization".

[1] Passport spelling: Aliaksei Lastouski, in Belarusian: Аляксей Ластоўскі

[2] In this case, "russo-centrism" is introduced as a term not widely used in human sciences previously, but quite suitable for definition of this project due to the shortcomings of other common definitions for this circle of ideas (Russian nationalism, Slavophilism/Slavic nationalism, West-Rusism).

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In this regard, the ideological form of russo-centrism possesses several specific features:

1. Idealism

This is a most important characteristic of russo-centrism, where idealism is manifested in two important aspects. Firstly, it is a constant emphasis on predominance of the spiritual over the material, the high over the low, the religious over the earthly. And secondly, it is the natural transition to an irrational world view, and accordingly, the same irrational type of substantiation;

2. Dualism

Within russo-centrism, the world in all its many facets is perceived and described through dichotomies, exclusively in black and white, where there is only Good and Evil (i.e. the highly spiritual Slavic World and the tainted materialistic West) between which there are no transition stages. The history of this world is regarded as the eternal struggle between the two principles; between them, there can't be any negotiations, agreements and compromises;

3. Conspiracy

Herewith, history and modernity are described not by rationalistic interpretations, but using a set of conspiracy theories. A hidden motive – most often an evil one – is sought behind any action; the underlying causes of the processes are linked to various conspiratory theories. This results in constant paranoid searches for enemies, even in the surrounding of "comrades". And, while russo-centrists correlate their own movement with idealism, clarity and purity of intentions, there are only two possible options for their ideological opponents: to be willful conspirators directed by far-reaching plans for destruction of the light and pure Slavic civilization and establishment of their sinister domination, or to be naive fools pragmatically used by the first category for their purposes.

4. Eschatology

The result of these broad conspiracy networks covering the whole world is the fact that the human civilization is regarded as one at the edge of destruction, which adds a tragic dimension to perception of the world as well as requires incredible spiritual mobilization.

Thus, due to availability of the stable ideologemes (Belarusians as a part of the Russian super-ethnos, dominant of the common Russian culture and language, direction for an alliance with Russia) and general discursive characteristics, we undertake to state about possible occurrence of a unified and coherent project of russo-centrism.

On the other hand, the russo-centrism project is not completely self-contained. Along with the ideological center, which is an unconditional

axiological dominant, there are certain moments that cause conflicting interpretations. Existence of ideological unity against enemies and the fact of defending the values of the Russian people does not at all mean a complete unanimity. Certain disagreements and debates are also possible within the project of russo-centrism. The following two aspects are most disputable: attitude towards the Soviet past (idealization or criticism), and assessment of the role of Orthodox Christianity (along with the dominant orthodox position there is also atheistic criticism, as well as inclinations towards pagan mysticism).

Institutional Design

Any intellectual project exists in cultural space in two major aspects:

1. as a society of personalities, intellectuals;
2. as a network of various institutional structures (political and social organizations, newspapers and magazines, various informal institutions).

First, we will mention some of the most remarkable personalities who are – to our opinion – critical for this project:

- *Lieŭ Kryštapovič (Lev Krishtapovich)*, Deputy Director of the Information-Analytical Center under Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Dr hab. in Philosophy, professor, former Scientific Secretary of the Institute of Social and Political Studies under Administration of the President;
- *Eduard Skobielieŭ (Skobelev)*, a writer, chief editor of the magazine "Information Bulletin of Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus";
- *Jaŭhien Roscikaŭ (Evgeny Rostikov)*, a journalist mostly cooperating with the Russian newspaper "Zavtra" ("Tomorrow");
- *Valiancin Akulaŭ (Valentin Akulov)*, Dr. hab. in Philosophy, professor at the Department of Philosophy in Minsk State Linguistic University.

In our opinion, these are the most representational advocates of russo-centrism, who steadily – since the early 90s and up to the present day – work in this direction. In their works, the essence and peculiarities of this intellectual project are expressed in the most concentrated and distinct form.

Many professional historians also work in the stream of russo-centrism. For some of them, this circle of ideas has become a comfortable harbor which was easy to switch to from the Soviet historiography (Pietrykaŭ, Staškievič,

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Zalieski, and others). But there is also a generation of young and "ideological" historians who try to re-execute this project using the modern language of humanitarian knowledge (Biendzin, Hihin, and others).

The one to be mentioned among the first here is Jakaŭ Traščanok, Candidate of historical sciences, associate professor of Mahilioŭ State University named after A. Kuliašoŭ. His views are particularly distant from the Soviet patterns of history writing, and in a bright and fairly radical form express the ideas of russo-centrism, not only in terms of historical substantiation, but also in terms of modern conceptualizations of the Belarusian nation.

For formation and development of any intellectual project, various periodicals are important. In this regard, the project of russo-centrism is clearly inferior to its ideological opponents and competitors. The "patriotic" press in Belarus, in contrast to Russia, is extremely poorly represented in terms of quantities.

Throughout the 1990s, there were several different newspapers which can be fully considered "russo-centrist" by their attitude:

1. "*Slavyanskie Vedomosti*" ("The Slavic Gazette"), published 1991-1992;
2. "*Rus' Belaya*" ("The White Rus"), published 1993-1995;
3. "*Lichnost*" ("Personality"), published 1996-1999);
4. "*Slavyanskij Nabat*" ("The Slavic Tocsin"), published 1997-1999.

The newspaper "Znamya Yunosti" ("The Banner of Youth") had also contained materials in a similar vein for long time, but this is a wider profile edition and can hardly be referred to purely "ideological publications". Rather close in position was the newspaper "My i vremya" ("We and Time"), but the main emphasis there was placed on propagating the revived version of the communist ideals.

The peak of printing activity of the russo-centrist project comes to 1997-1999, when two weekly newspapers were published simultaneously, "Slavyanskij Nabat" and "Lichnost". It is not hard to note that, at this moment, the project of russo-centrism has almost no media resources of its own (this is, in our opinion, very important), and therefore the mentioned "speakers" use their weight and influence for publications in either state-controlled media in Belarus, or in Russian patriotic periodicals.

The proximity of ideological attitudes and good relationships with the government allow the leading representatives of the russo-centrist project to be regularly published in major national newspapers, but such possibilities can hardly fully replace the lack of specialized publications where such ideas could be translated and disseminated.

As for the movements and public organizations, the peak here has also already passed in 1993-1999, when such organizations as the Council (Sabor)

“Bielaja Ruś” and the Belarusian branch of the Russian National Unity (RNE) were active. However, after assassination of Hlieb Samojlaŭ, the leader of this organization, in 2000 RNE in Belarus came to an obvious decline, and several later attempts to revive the organizational structure failed.

Now, there are few marginal small radical groups that are active (“Schoron Ež Slavien”, “The Slavic Union”), but they are small and focused mainly on agitation among the youth, and can hardly be considered serious actors in Belarusian politics.

Close in orientation to the ideals of russo-centrism is the Belarusian Patriotic Party, headed by Anatoĺ Barankievič until 2001. After his death, Mikalaj Ulachovič has become the party leader, who at the same time is the Supreme Ataman of the Republican Public Association “Belarusian Cossacks” (and also the first editor of “Lichnost” newspaper). It’s worth mentioning that the party was officially registered and has been operating for a long time (since 1996), but it has failed to achieve anything significant - neither in political, nor in ideological terms - and has remained on the periphery of the cultural and political space of Belarus.

Another peculiar place where the ideas of russo-centrism are created and propagated is a series of international scientific and practical conferences held under the supervision of Uladzimir Sacevič. Sacevič himself leads social activities in several directions. He is the chairman of the “Human Ecology” Committee under the Belarusian Social and Ecological Union, a member of the Coordinating Council of the Union of Struggle for People’s Sobriety, and at the same time acts as the organizer of the Rodnovery (Slavic Neo-Pagan) movement in Belarus. Following the conferences’ results, digests under a characteristic name “The Slavic Veche” are published (in total, four such digests had been published by 2009). Selection of materials in these digests is very eclectic. There, one can find manifestos of Rodnovers/Neopagans, anti-Semitic slogans, as well as conventional scientific reports on various matters, which with the same success could be announced at any academic conference. At the same time, many of the key “speakers” of russo-centrism are actively involved in these conferences (Kryštapovič and Skobielieŭ). A lot of Russian national patriots of various stripes are also invited, so with some reserve the conferences can be attributed to this political project.

Genesis and Ideological Sources

The range of ideas that underpin the project of russo-centrism has deep historical origins, but in their modern version they were first articulated in the movement of West-Rusism.

In fact, the modern russo-centrism in Belarus is the ideological successor of West-Rusism of the 19th century. This succession is recognized and emphasized.

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One of the most important figures of West-Rusism is a 19th century historian Michail Kajalovič. Noteworthy is the fact that addressing to his heritage comes not only in the form of symbolic appeals and rhetorical praises, but also through the intensive practical application of his works in reconstruction of historical past of the Belarusian people. For example, historiosophic and historiographic essays of L. Kryštapovič "Belarus and the Russian Civilization" (Kryštapovič, 1999) are directly based on historical works of Michail Kajalovič, which is clearly evident from the references.

The Slavophil-nationalist trend in Russian philosophy of the 19th - beginning of the 20th century became another source for formation of the russo-centrist project. A fairly wide circle of thinkers (from Dostoevsky to Ilyin) are introduced into practice, but the use of their works is highly selective. Primarily, references to the idea of Slavic unity and high Russian spirituality are used.

While references to West-Rusism and Slavophilism are likely to be used for the purposes of legitimization, infusion of credibility and historical gloss, the most important real source of ideas, images and verbal formulas is the modern national-patriotic movement in Russia. This influence can be defined both in a latent form (common themes and description techniques) and by massive abundance of citations, reprints, etc. In addition, we have already mentioned that works of many representatives of russo-centrism are often published in Russian periodicals of nationalistic and patriotic sense ("Zavtra", "Nash sovremennik" ("Our Contemporary"), "Russkij vestnik" ("The Russian Messenger"), etc.). So, in terms of declared unity of the Russian world, here one can really observe certain commonality among the Slavophil patriotic wing in Russia and Belarus.

Evolution of Development

During the period under review (1990-2008), there was a definite evolution in the content and formulations of the russo-centrist project, which took place due to both internal development and changes in the socio-political situation in Belarus.

The early 1990s were characterized by an acute painful reaction to the disintegration of the USSR, which was accompanied by rejection of the newly formed Belarusian state, acute antipathy to the authorities which were considered as realizing the interests of the BNF (Belarusian Popular Front). At that time, one of the most important problems was the Russian language issue: "*In Belarus, in the result of the activities of nationalists and led by the nose executive government structures, an unnatural situation was formed, when the Russian language – the language of the indigenous nation, spoken and thought in by most of the citizens of the Republic – is placed outside the law, strongly prejudiced and suppressed*" (Appeal ..., 1993). A public campaign for

return of the official status of the Russian language was unfolded; numerous articles stating that the Russian language is native to Belarusians were published; various manifestos and appeals demanding to provide the Russian language with official status were also often published.

A requirement for restoration of a unified state with Russia can be considered another main line in the journalism of that period. Despite the fact that the very idea of a "union state" is central for the project of russo-centrism, it was formulated in different ways. If in 1991-1992 the Soviet Union was declared an ideal form of government for coexistence of the Russian and Belarusian peoples, then in subsequent years we are talking about creation of a unified state of Russia and Belarus. And in the early years of existence of the independent Belarusian state, this project appealed rather to elimination of this "strange" state formation: "*In such a situation it is better to hand over our destiny to Great Russia*" (Tarasievič, 1993).

Since the beginning of Lukašenka's presidency, a gradual conversion to the complete loyalty to the government from the representatives of the russo-centrist project takes place, although it is clear that up to 1995 they had been still looking narrowly at him. But Lukašenka's practical implementation of the main demands vital for russo-centrism – making Russian a state language, creating a union state with Russia (albeit, not in as radical a form that russo-centrists were dreaming about), constant symbolic appeals to the Russian culture and Russian people – have naturally attracted the sympathies of russo-centrists to him.

Since that time, this political project of nation has been actively supported by the new President of the Republic of Belarus, which continues to the present day.

But such an "overloyalty" position towards Lukašenka's policy has led to some changes of the ideological requirements. Exactly the idea of an alliance with Russia underwent the most significant transformations. The initial slogan of a simple return to Russia was clearly irrelevant in the light of the independent policy held by the Belarusian state. So, it was necessary to look for some other solutions for achieving the objective of restoring a unified state with the Russian people. From around 1997-1998, much more cautious plans on creating a union state began to be pronounced, lacking their initial enthusiasm: "A*t any integration movements – economic, political, military, or cultural – we must save our state, and not to dissolve it in new formations. Going for a union with Russia, we must not turn ourselves into hostages of the criminal comprador factions fighting there against each other and selling their country to the foreign capital. Neither must we become a cesspool for accumulation of the criminal element coming from all over the CIS. We have to approach [Russia] as a centralized Slavic state, and with our organization and stability to contribute to stabilization of the Russian state, self-organization of the*

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Slavic population there as well as its release from the influence of hostile to Russia political forces" (Malaška, 1998).

At the same time, it is worth noting that compared to all the other projects of nation existing in the Belarusian political space, russo-centrism is the most rigid and stable one. Alterations that took place in its ideological core within the last two decades are minor and relate mainly to reformulation of objectives for political practice. As opposed to the state project, russo-centrism does not need to immediately adjust to the actual tasks of socio-political development, which allows it to preserve the ideological purity. Unlike ethnic nationalism and the liberal-democratic project, it has not experienced severe crises due to displacement from the political sphere and public marginalization. This peculiar position allows russo-centrism to maintain the integrity of its central postulates.

Correlation with Other Projects of Belarusian Nation

The project of russo-centrism bases its own ideas about the cultural and political landscape in our country on the emphasized dualistic pattern, where only two poles of the Good and the Evil are possible.

Thus, there are only forces that defend the interests of the Belarusian people, and the forces that carry out an anti-people and anti-national policy. In Jakaŭ Traščanok's statement, these are the two national ideas – the Orthodox national idea and the Catholic national separatism. One of them is certainly "right":

"*The historical traditions of the Belarusian people, their worldview, and their system of values correspond only to the first, the Orthodox direction. It is this route that the overwhelming majority of people consistently give their votes for in elections and referendums, and this path is represented by a charismatic national leader A. Lukašenka*" (Traščanok, 2006: 64). The other national idea is unnatural and false; moreover, it is deadly dangerous for the Belarusian people: "*The Catholic separatism is an attempt to destroy the national mentality, to replace a living entity with an artificial construction. If such an attempt succeeded, it would mean a spiritual murder of the people, which would then be followed by a physical killing of the Orthodox East Slavic ethnos*" (Traščanok, The Two ...).

The opponents' camp appears as something homogenous and static, completely devoid of differentiation and dynamics. There are only firm descriptive characteristics: nationalists, acolytes of the Western masters, etc. No significant difference between ethno-cultural nationalists and Liberal Democrats is drawn – anyway, they are "traitors of the Motherland" – so the nuances of their views are of no interest for russo-centrism.

Correspondingly, there can be no dialogue or discussion between the aforementioned national ideas. The modern cultural and political situation

of the national development in Belarus is described as antagonistic, in which only struggle is possible. Though, it is still not clear where the space for unfolding of this confrontation is. In fact, the relationships develop in terms of a unilateral debate, i.e. on basis of publications and presentations using some excerpts from the opponents' discourse and the episodes that could serve a foundation for accusations. In any case, the opposition camp (albeit in an undifferentiated form) performs a vital function of the "enemy" for russo-centrism, in many ways providing the meaning and purpose for its existence.

Much more difficult is to draw the line between russo-centrism and the government project of the Belarusian nation. We have already mentioned that russo-centrism consistently maintains a policy of loyalty and devotion to the state authority. Another additional problem is inclusion of many prominent representatives of russo-centrism in the state elite of the Republic of Belarus. Therefore, the dividing line between these two projects is blurred, but still exists (otherwise it would not be worthy even to talk about a separate ideological project).

Russo-centrism as a project of national identity is stable and centered around a clearly defined range of ideas; it is idealistic in its essence. The state project of the Belarusian nation is pragmatic; it varies depending on the socio-political agenda.

The project of russo-centrism creates an idealized image of the President Aliaksandr Lukašenka as a personification of people's interests, a charismatic leader who intuitively realizes and implements the national policy. But there still remains an opportunity for russo-centrists to take up an attitude of vigilant and conscientious guardians of people's interests, who can see the situation more clearly and fully, give advice and point out errors.

Meanwhile, there are certain similarities in the ideas, values and rhetoric of russo-centrism and the state project: we are talking about accentuation on closeness of the Belarusian and Russian peoples, prescription for priority of alliance with Russia, sympathies for Orthodoxy. But if for russo-centrism all coordinate systems are clearly arranged (salvation is in the union with Russia, while the West brings spiritual and physical death for Belarus), the government project contains possibilities for situational changes and political games (which was demonstrated during the "gas" and "milk" trade wars with Russia).

Nevertheless, most analysts tend to ignore these differences and, moreover, to easily identify the authorities with the ideas and values of russo-centrism in its rigid version. Such simplification and reduction of the state of affairs, in our opinion, leads to an erroneous understanding of the essence and nature of processes taking place in the cultural and political sphere of Belarus.

But let's proceed directly to how the Belarusian nation is presented and described within the project of russo-centrism.

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Political Community

The fundamental principle for constitution of any identity is the division between "insiders" and "outsiders". Conceptualization of the community of "insiders" in russo-centrism can be represented as consisting of several concentric circles centered on Belarusians, followed by a wider community of "insiders" - the Russian people, and, finally, followed by a still wider and at the same vague community of the Slavic world.

The central notion, of course, is the category of the "Belarusian people". Within this project, it is not a subject for clear conceptualization, although the main feature is clearly distinguished as essential belonging of the Belarusian people to the Russian civilization. Often descriptions of the "Belarusian people" involve clichés from the Soviet times: ordinary toilers, working people, etc.

Theoretical conceptualization at a higher level can be found with Jakaŭ Traščanok who resorts not to rhetorical figures of the Soviet epoch, but to the modern terminology of the social knowledge, and uses the concept of "political nation": "*All citizens of this country, regardless of their ethnic origin, constitute a unified political nation. Thus, our country is called Belarus, though apart from Belarusians who constitute the majority, it is inhabited by many other ethnic groups. And the polyethnic nation residing in Belarus is called the Belarusian nation. The Belarusian ethnos itself represents only the core of the Belarusian political nation and is not identical to it on the whole*" (Traščanok, 2006: 25).

But russo-centrism is far from the ideals of civic nationalism that involves inclusivism by political principle (all citizens of the country form a political nation).

Firstly, a very strong emphasis is placed on essential characteristics inherent to the Belarusian people – the culture, spirit and mentality, which means that in addition to citizenship, for being a Belarusian one must possess certain cultural qualities. Accordingly, in order to enter the number of Belarusians, just citizenship is apparently not enough, and here Traščanok contradicts himself: "*Today, a Belarusian may profess any religion or be an atheist, but what makes him a Belarusian is a real belonging to genetically Eastern Christian subsystem of European civilization and East Slavic (all-Russian) culture, of which the Belarusian culture is an integral part*" (Traščanok, 2006: 35). Thus, the main criterion of belonging to the Belarusian nation is not ethnic origin and citizenship, but identification with a specific set of values.

On the other hand, a part of ethnic Belarusians who have different political views are excluded from the Belarusian people.

Another, broader circle of "our" people is the Russian people, Russian world, Russian civilization, a part of which – according to the ideologists of russo-cen-

trism – Belarusians certainly are: "*We see the people of Belarus as an integral part of the Russian people. For us, the notion of 'Russian' is not the same as 'Great Russian'. Great Russians are just a part of the Russian people, while the other parts are Belarusians, Little Russians (Ukrainians), and Ruthenians. In other words, Belarusians, Great Russians, Little Russians, and Ruthenians are subethne of the single Russian ethnos*" (Lies and the Truth ..., 1994).

And finally, a wider areal of "insiders" is the Slavic world. Although a marker of "Slavic" is often used for designation of the community of "insiders", its interpretation significantly differs from ethnolinguistic criteria. Most often, the term "Slavic" is used only in relation to East Slavic peoples (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians), while the West and South Slavs have a very doubtful status with regard to belonging to the mythologized "Slavic world". This especially concerns those nations where Catholicism is widely spread, but for the Orthodox South Slavic peoples there is also no place at the heart of Slavic civilization. They remain on the periphery of thinking and rhetoric of russo-centrism.

The Past of Belarusians

Russo-centrism has strong historiographical tradition which derives its origins from both the historical constructions of West-Rusism and reanimation of the Soviet historiography. We have already noted that the formulation of this project involves many professional historians (many with degrees of Candidates and Doctors of sciences).

In general, it can be stated that references to the past play an important role for the russo-centrist and ethno-national projects in legitimizing their claims for the present of Belarus (while the statist and liberal-democratic projects rather parasitize on works of their competitors). Moreover, the project of russo-centrism looks historicist, in which the notional center is exactly in the past.

Appeals to the past within the framework of this ideological project have two main goals (both directly arising from the dichotomous nature of this type of world view): legitimization of conceptualization of the Belarusian people as an integral part of the Russian super-ethnos using historical material, and, consequently, de-legitimization of the "enemies" and an "alien" interpretation of the Belarusian past, again with extensive use of historical facts.

First, we will examine how the first goal is implemented. It arises from the basic assertion, the cornerstone of this ideological project: Belarusians are a part of the Russian super-ethnos: "A *Belarusian, similar to a Great Russian and a Ukrainian, in his outlook, practical life and culture is a Russian man; and Belarus, like Russia and Ukraine, constitutes a part of a single Russian civilization. A Belarusian is ethnically, historically and spiritually a Russian man*" (Kryštapovič, 1998b).

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The search for common roots goes back to the boundary of the 1st-2nd millennia AD, when the East Slavic tribes – according to the ideologists of this project – formed a feudal union - the Russian land, Rus'. From here, the roots of unity of the Russian people arise, which remains to this day. A direct continuity of historiographical constructions with the works of representatives of West-Rusism and the Soviet historical school is preserved, where relationship of the Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian people taking roots in Kyivan Rus' was substantiated: *"The ancient Russian state, or Kyivan Rus', a formed ancient Russian nationality, gave birth to Belarusian, Ukrainian and Great Russian (Russian) nationalities which are different, but united in their base by the common origin, language and Orthodox faith, culture and spirituality"* (Pietrykaŭ, 2007: 33).

The civilizational unity formed on basis of Orthodoxy was not broken even when on the ruins of the "Russian world" feuding states were formed – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Grand Duchy of Moscow. Actually, starting from this point, a division into three new ethnic groups takes place in the "bosom of the Russian people". They, however, are always considered as parts of a single super-ethnos within this project.

At this time appears an image of one of the worst enemies of the Russian people (and, accordingly, of the Belarusian people) – Poles, or, more precisely, the Polish political elite of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which allegedly sought to destroy the East Slavic Orthodox civilization through a forced Polonization and Catholization. Particularly negative attitude gets the fact of adoption of the Polish culture and Catholicism by the local szlachta, which was regarded as an act of betrayal towards the "traditional" Orthodox culture, which in its turn had dire consequences for the development of the Belarusian people: *"As a result, by the end of the 18th century, Belarusian ethnos was virtually without its elite, intellectuals, schools, literary language, and typography. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it was doomed to Polonization, ethnic extinction and disappearance from the map of Europe"* (Pietrykaŭ, 2004).

Active assistance in destruction of the Orthodox (Russian) civilization in Belarusian lands was also provided by one more identified enemy - the Jesuits: *"The main activity of the Jesuits in Belarus came down to de-nationalization of our people, even though it was covered by allegedly higher state and religious purposes"* (Kryštapovič, 1999: 78). The instrument for such destructive impact was the church union, the attitude to which from russo-centrism is sharply negative.

In general, the period of history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has no particular semantic meaning in historiographical constructions of this project, it is considered merely a transitional period to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, to the time of oppression and decline. At that, the oppression of Polish szlachta had two basic dimensions: cultural-religious and socio-economic.

No wonder that partition of the Commonwealth and connection of Belarusian lands to the Russian Empire acquires the status of an act of salvation for the oppressed Belarusian people, almost a divine intervention that saved the ethnos from the threat of a final Polonization: "*Connection of Belarusian lands to the Russian Empire, inclusion of the Belarusian ethnos into a related Great-Russian historical and cultural body opened a new chapter in our history. Belarusians' struggle for survival in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had ended. A difficult process of recovery of historical memory and consciousness of the Belarusian people, development of their spirituality, culture and national and state self-determination started*" (Pietrykaŭ, 2007: 35).

In the same light is the history of the 19th century described, as being almost a golden age for Belarusians. Suvorov and Muravyev are seen as defenders and guardians of the Belarusian people, while the Kosciuszko and Kalinowski are overthrown from the top of the national pantheon and fall under the category of "Catholic national separatists" whose roots go back to the eternal oppressors of the Belarusian peasantry, the Polish szlachta.

The term "separatism" is used in the project as a replacement for "nationalism" that was rehabilitated in the Russian patriotic discourse of the 90s. Due to the fact that in Belarusian public discourse the tag "nationalists" has been well established for ethno-national political forces, an operation for semantic substitution of "nationalists" with "separatists" was performed.

The attitude to the Soviet period in the framework of the project is ambiguous. On the one hand, the Soviet Union is always described as a powerful state, from which the people of Belarus tangibly benefited: "*Revolution woke the energy and enthusiasm of the workers. In a short period allocated by history, by extreme effort, the country of plow and flail was turned into a mighty industrial power which the leading Western states had to consider. After the revolution, the country established a system of guaranteed employment, provided free education, health service, and right to rest. Belarus, which gained statehood in post-October period, in alliance with other brotherly republics has made a breakthrough in creating a powerful economic potential, development of culture and education. For Belarusians, formerly a peasant nation, such access to knowledge was opened, which they did not know through the whole history of their existence*" (Kazliakoŭ, 1997).

Most stable are positive evaluations in political circles which are close to the Communists, as well as among the old generation of historians (Pietrykaŭ, Staškievič, etc.).

On the other hand, some representatives of russo-centrism (primarily Skobielieŭ, Traščanok, Siarhiejeŭ) allow from time to time some critical attacks against the Soviet state, where the main blames are underlining the bureaucratization of power and accusations of forced Belarusization.

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In any case, the disintegration of the USSR is seen as a tragic event, primarily because a natural unity of the Russian super-ethnos had been destroyed, resulting in disastrous economic and cultural processes.

Another strategy of appeals to the historical past is a struggle against "falsifications" of history by political opponents of russo-centrism, first and foremost including the historians of the national-democratic camp. Reviewing publications on historical themes in the corresponding periodicals, it is easy to notice that the number of materials on the "correct" exposition of history is equal to the criticism of alternative historical interpretations.

It is worth noting that the criticism of national historiography is generally one of the biggest challenges articulated in the project of russo-centrism. "Unscientific" and "unhistorical" nature of national historiography is emphasized: *"The culturological feature of the nationalist historical school, which quite unreasonably pretends to be representative of the Belarusian national historiography, is an immature study of the history of Belarus (Byelorussia). Such a study, without requiring a thoughtful research, is generally satisfied with superficial historical analogies and external set of facts*" (Kryštapovič, 1999: 11). Another methodological accusation is of "Jesuit" dealing with historical facts, where the opponents are accused of ignoring the context, juggling and distorted interpretations.

In the stream of the mentioned conspiracy, the historians who defend the national (nationalistic) version of the Belarusian past are seen as having a whole set of far-reaching intentions. Primarily, they are accused of creating artificial barriers between the Belarusian and Russian peoples, who – as we remember – appear an inseparable whole in the project of russo-centrism. The work with historical past is presented as a tool for achieving specific political goals: "*Playing on historical ignorance of everyman and trying to provoke anti-Russian sentiments in a simple man, nationalists are striving to drive a wedge between the brotherly peoples to continue implementation of their anti-people and anti-national reforms in Belarus, in order to please their Western masters*" (Kryštapovič, 1999: 24).

Several key episodes for the Belarusian historiography, which are being "purified" from falsifications and nationalist distortions by historians loyal to the paradigm of russo-centrism, can be highlighted here:

1. indication of the all-Russian character of Kyivan Rus', resulting in disputed interpretation of the Principality of Polack being the origin of Belarusian statehood;
2. dethronement of the image of the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a "golden age" for Belarusian national history (it is stated that the power in that state belonged to ethnically and re-

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ligiously alien elite; moreover, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is considered only a transition period to the policy of Polonization and Catholization in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth);

3. rehabilitation of the Stalinist regime, which unfolds in two main directions: accentuation of Stalin's leading role in victory of the Great Patriotic War and criticism of attributing the communist leader with organization of mass repressions (in this field, particularly fruitful is the chairman of "Historical Knowledge" society, Dr hab. in History Adam Zalieski).

The historical basis in the project of russo-centrism is very solid, as russo-centrists are using both the work results of historians of West-Rusism and the rich heritage of the Soviet school of historiography. But despite the broadest use of historical material, the vision of the past in the project of russo-centrism is very peculiar. In this case, we can consider existence of a special historiosophy, completely unscientific in its character and essence. On the one hand, all historical facts adapt to an already specified tough interpretive scheme, which eliminates the need for hypotheses and research as there is nothing more do discover in history; its meaning and purpose is clear and understandable.

On the other hand, the past in the project of russo-centrism is monolithic; it does not have a chronological axis, which allows to mix different historical epochs and different social strata in ideological collages. Polish noblemen, collaborators, Jesuits, Hitlerites, BNF members are one common enemy with the same attitudes and aspirations. Again, the triune Russian people appear as an eternal and invariable spiritual substance, the character and values of which exist in a crystallized form for millennia. Essentialism here takes an extreme form of expression, where historical facts are used to enrich the description of idealistic entities.

Modernity

It is impossible to imagine the modern picture of the world drawn in russo-centrism without considering the discursive characteristics of this ideological project, which were outlined earlier.

Thus, the world in the ideology of russo-centrism is perceived strictly dualistically, it is rigidly divided into two parts, between which there are no crossings and compromises: East - West, Good - Evil, God - Satan, etc.

Naturally, the Russian people – or its semantic substitute the Slavic world – constitute the positive pole. In fact, it can be claimed that "humanity" and "humaneness" come down to the Russian/Slavic world. Only the Russian people possess spirituality, culture and – consequently – civilization. Every-

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thing else around is perceived as a space that is completely subordinate to the forces of evil striving to destroy the last bastion of civilization and high spirit.

The Russian people carry out a unique providential mission which reaches the scale of salvation of the whole world. According to the views of the ideologists of russo-centrism, the world is already at the edge of a catastrophe, full extinction, and only the Russian people can prevent its destruction.

The forthcoming (and, perhaps, inevitable?) disaster has two primary dimensions: spiritual and the one of natural resources. Oddly enough, but exactly the struggle for vanishing resources is becoming the main explanatory motive for many processes occurring in the modern world. The collapse of the Soviet Union is described exclusively as a carefully planned and technologically implemented action by the Western world caused by desire to possess the vast raw material reserves of this state.

Another important dimension of the crisis of the modern world lies in the spiritual realm. The Western civilization is described as degenerative, spiritless, and materialistic. Furthermore, the degraded and decaying West is trying to aggressively subdue the last bastion of civilization – the Russian culture – primarily through mass culture and mass media: "*Children's souls are programmed to the standard of living not attainable by honest means, and at the same time a psychological filter is formed, through which only cultural sleaze seeps into the soul of the youth, while everything truly beautiful and human is filtered out. From the Western culture only its rubbish is adopted, not its masterpieces. Ignorance in national and world culture is formed, similar to that instilled by the Hitlerite kulturtragers around the occupied Slavic territories. As a result, two categories of people are being brought up – the working rednecks, unaware that they are rednecks, and the Janissaries, in case if the rednecks suddenly get wiser and rebel*" (Citoŭ, 1997).

Thus, the modern reality is described as a permanent spiritual and information war against the Slavic world. Here we approach the multifaceted and complex image of an existential "enemy" for Belarusians/Russian people/Slavs. Despite the constant shading of this image, referring to its mystique and power (otherwise it would be difficult to maintain the conspiracy strain), by a number of texts it is possible to reconstruct the essence and origin of this "enemy", which is most often labelled as the "secret world government".

Its genealogy has roots far back in history, and more specifically in such religious-political doctrine as Zionism, which is described as a "racist misanthropic ideology". Completely ignored is the historical context in which the political movement of Zionism aimed primarily at unification and revival of the Jewish people in their historic homeland, Israel. Instead, a conspiracy myth is reproduced, which is very popular among Russian national patriots (from where it was most probably borrowed) about the sinister Zionist aim to

establish the world domination. *"The goal of the Zionists is to establish financial and political control in the world through their people in governments and in business; through banking and fund capital; through subordinate media. A sort of giant monopoly of a handful of super-rich Jews, obsessed with the idea of richness (they have only one god - dollar!)"* (Dyktaturaŭ, 1997). Moreover, even European fascism is described as a product of Zionism.[3]

Another sinister secret organization credited with ominous plans is Masons. Again, the theory and practice of Masonic Lodges is completely ignored; instead, the fantasy of apologists of russo-centrism creates fantastic images of power pyramids of joined together Zionist and Masonic clans, primarily in Israel and the U.S. The foreign policy of these countries is perceived as fully controlled by the all-powerful Zionist-Masonic secret government: *"In the U.S., Judeo-Zionism has taken rather strong roots; a powerful pro-Israeli lobby is in force. U.S. imperialism, merged with Zionism, has open claims to world dominance, threatening people with tomahawks and undertaking gendarme functions"* (Dyktaturaŭ, 1997).

Particular attention is paid to the ideological opponents of the project of russo-centrism who are declared conscious agents of the "secret world government", or, at best, are pawns in the hands of foreigners. This is one of specific "axioms", constant motifs which are repeated in almost every article or book created by the "speakers" of russo-centrism.

We have already noted a peculiar historicism, which is indicative for the project of russo-centrism. It is also reflected on the image of "enemies" in building of Belarusian national identity — National Democrats, which are identified with historical forces perceived by the ideologists of russo-centrism as hostile to the Belarusian/Russian people. Besides, the favorite rhetorical device is again mixing of different historical times, when the Polish noblemen, collaborators of the period of World War II, and modern Belarusian nationalists can be used in the same sentence as equivalents. For russo-centrism, it's all the same, a deadly dangerous "Enemy" to be destroyed.

In a softer version, it is a question of similarity in aspirations, values and practices; in a harder option, it is a question of direct succession.

In fact, quite in the style of essentialist representations, Belarusian nationalists are attributed with a "native" craving for treason. Constant parallels are held with the local szlachta, which committed a "treason" by adopting Catholicism and the Polish language; and then with the Belarusian national figures who created the Belarusian People's Republic, which again "betrayed" the interests of the country to Germans (favorite example in this case is the notorious telegram to Kaiser Wilhelm). Finally, a favourite comparison is

[3] Though, it is possible to find another genealogy of fascism as a product of Western democracy: *"Fascism naturally developed from that level of Western democracy, was a logical continuation of the values of that capitalism. That's why the upper middle class, the financial magnates placed their stake on the open terrorist dictatorship designed to stifle the labor movement and socialism, to defend the interests of capital. This is the main cause of the origin of fascism"* (Kazliyakoŭ, 1998).

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constant genealogical references to the activities of collaborators during the Second World War.

The Belarusian nationalists are accused of trying to rehabilitate the collaborators, which, according to representatives of russo-centrism is another direct evidence of identity of "traitors" of different times (Kazliakoŭ, 1998). Especially criticized is the BNF: "*No one other than the BNF have raised on the shield the bitter enemies of the Belarusian people, its bloody executioners – collaborators who served Hitler*" (Sciepanienka, 1999).

Thus, in russo-centrists' representations Belarus (and wider – Russian-Slavic civilization) is opposed to the Zionist secret government, which controls almost the whole world and relies on the "fifth column" inside the country: "*It's no secret that the republic is literally stuffed with various foundations, residents, magisters, emissaries of various Western organizations, with sects of Western origin and other 'agents of influence', covertly and overtly leading their subversive activities. This rat race has even been joined by representatives of foreign embassies*" (Barankievič, 1996). Representatives of various opposition political movements are also described as agents of Western influence: "*What is behind the passion of the West to 'democratize Belarus'? It's to form a so-called 'political elite', endowing it with full authority. Simply put, to prepare administration for the future colonial Belarus which would faithfully serve the new master*" (Akulaŭ, 1997). Their aim is not only establishment of the Western control over the country, but also intervention in the process of unification of the Slavic peoples.

Yet estimations of the current situation in the country within the framework of russo-centrism are of rather optimistic nature. It's claimed that the plans for enslaving a small independent country have failed, which is explained by two main reasons.

Firstly, the values of the Western world, with a focus on acquisitiveness and selfishness, are organically alien to the unchangeable and sustainable character of the Belarusian/Russian people: "*The negative attitude of our people to the Western system of values is due to its civilizational nature*" (Chramaŭ, 1997). Therefore, any attempts of Belarusian nationalists to enforce a different system of ideological coordinates are pre-destined to fail: "*Their views are not able to contain the unshakable Slavic absolute values, to understand the people's archetype preserving the global historical subjectivity throughout the Slavic-Orthodox civilization. Invented 'overseas' for Belarusians, the so-called 'nationalism' has neither in ethnic nor in state package no relation to the Slavic world, and can not seduce Belarusians, who think and feel by different standards*" (Huryn, 1997).

Secondly, highly emphasized is the role played by the President of the Republic of Belarus Aliaksandr Lukašenka, who is regarded as personification of people's values: "*It is not accidentally that millions of people call Lukašenka*

'batska' ('the father'): he is called to fulfill the aspirations of the masses, and he, like nobody else in the CIS territory, seeks to fulfil them" (Skobielieŭ, 1997). But if "the people" is attributed with a passive rejection of the alien values, Lukašenka appears as a dynamic actor carrying out a life-saving mission of prevention of conspiracy against the Belarusian people.

Thus, the present situation in Belarus is described as a confrontation between two forces - the Belarusian people (the embodiment of spirit and values of which is Aliaksandr Lukašenka) and the secret world government, which with the help of its agents – the opposition forces – is trying to establish control over the country. In this case, this confrontation is becoming even more significant. Belarus (and its President) is regarded as the last bastion of the Russian world, defending the values of the Slavic civilization from the aggressive attack of the secret world government: "*Just because Belarus resists the Western plans and retains the Slavo-Soviet nature of civilization, it is subjected to fierce attacks from all the pro-Western forces. Figuratively speaking, all the powers of hell are thrown today at Belarus to knock it out from its Slavic orbit and bind it to the Western chariot, rushing to the underworld*" (Kryštapovič, 1997).

Accordingly, Belarus is endowed with soteriological status of the "savior of the world", since all human civilization is equated with Rus': "*So far, only Belarus retains the potential capability to arouse the rest of Rus' to great deeds… Even now Lukašenka unconsciously acts in the spirit of the Slavic teachings. As an example, we can take the union of Belarus and Russia. Meanwhile it is only a formal union, but if it is filled with content, Rus' will not only save itself, but will also save the other peoples from the approaching disaster*" (Niemčynaŭ, 2002: 175). It respectively endues the political confrontation with a visionary dimension, where the defenders of values of the Slavic civilization regard themselves as the last defenders of the Good: "*We declare holy war on Universal Evil. In spite of everything, we grain by grain will lay the foundation of the future Greatness and Rebirth*" (Hieraščanka, 1994).

Development Forecast

The forecast scenarios in the project of russo-centrism are saturated with eschatological overtones, which follows from description of the current situation: since virtually the entire world is under the control of a secret Zionist government and Belarus remains the only island of freedom, just two scenarios are offered - depending on whether Zionists will subdue our country or not.

Thus, in the publicist works of representatives of russo-centrism, much attention is paid to describing the tragic pictures of the future of the world, turning most people into obedient slaves as a result of the globalist dictatorship.

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It is assumed that the first step towards the end of the world will be the puppet forces' coming to power, which would pass our country under Western control. Respectively, all chances for restoring the union of Slavic peoples – the only hope for salvation of the world by a modest estimation of russo-centrists – will be eliminated.

The picture of the "new world order" looks terrifying and palpitating. It involves establishment of a secret political and economic control of the secret Zionist government over all countries of the world through their placemen, as well as through international funds. In the territory of the former Soviet Union, the task of "Zionists" is maximal fragmentation of the states, preventing any integration processes, which will facilitate the establishment of full control over these territories. In parallel will come the process of imposing the Western values that are perceived as totally alien to the Slavic spirit and, accordingly, the result will be only destruction of the foundations of the Slavic civilization.

On the one hand, creation of national states after breakup of the Soviet Union is considered as a direct result of the underground activity of the secret world government and its agents, but on the other hand, nations themselves are becoming subject to further destruction as obstacles on the way of establishment of the total control over the world: "*But its (Western – A.L.) goal is abolition of national cultures and their viability, absorption of the Western civilization by the monster of mondialism which is a geopolitical instrument of the gang dreaming of the global hegemony and insistently making their way to it*" (Skobielieŭ, 1997).

The image of the coming liberal-democratic world has clearly pronounced apocalyptic properties, where the task of "the world's backstage" is "*to turn the multicoloured modern world into some colourless 'geopolitical space', where Satan and his servants will dance their demonic dances*" (Akulaŭ, 1997).

Such motives contribute to increasing the motivation for social mobilization of supporters of the russo-centrist project, entrusting them with a special mission of saving the world.

We have already mentioned that virtually the only obstacle to the eschatological scenario is Belarus, with its Slavic values and messianic leader Aliaksandr Lukašenka. This implies the unconditional support of his policy, which is regarded as the practical realization of the values and ideals of russo-centrism. In fact, the program requirements are reduced to continuation and development of already followed economic, social and cultural policy.

Particularly important is the "restoration" of a union of Slavic peoples (although quite permissible seems a reduction to alliance with Russia). Since the Russian people are viewed solely as a trinity of three peoples, any disruption of this integrity is perceived as a painful injury that interferes with preservation of culture and advocacy of our statehood. Therefore, the union with Russia acquires the status of the most important task, even though its prospects are described in rather vague terms.

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The most concrete is the guidance for certain economic benefits achieved with the help of this union: access to Russia's richest reserves of raw materials, the common market, etc. Another important motivation for unification is the possibility of a more successful opposition to the aggressive plans of the "Zionist government": "*Today, the historic watershed in Belarus is not between democracy and dictatorship, but between colonial dependence on the West and association of Belarus and Russia into the Union State, leading to the release from the Western dependence and anti-people reforms*" (Kryštapovič, 1998).

But more significant this union is still for idealistic reasons which are always at the head of the project of russo-centrism. It is assumed that with the creation of the Union State, a start will be given to the revival of humane system of values: social justice, national equality, labour, solidarity, unity, mutual assistance. No specific mechanisms and ways of establishing such an ideal state are prescribed: simple elimination of the traumatically perceived separation should already lead to a harmonious society.

Conclusion

For some time, the project of russo-centrism fit into the ideological agenda of the Belarusian government quite well, which was particularly noticeable in the second half of the 1990s, when the plan to create a union state with Russia was most actual. At that time, the ideas of russo-centrism were considered as substantiation for this geopolitical alliance. But the fixed stiffness and rigidity of this ideological project has led to a gradual marginalization of the representatives of russo-centrism from the influence on taking particular political decisions. While maintaining the leading "speakers'" prestigious positions in the government, russo-centrism itself increasingly does not correspond to the situational and dynamic state interests. The chosen strategy of fighting with the economic crisis (liberalization, aid from international financial institutions) leads to erosion and dissolution of the established russo-centrist ideologemes (Lukašenka as a heroic fighter against the international financial system). Correspondingly, the present situation poses a serious challenge to the project of russo-centrism when the set of interpretational schemes fixed in this article should be changed as losing its applicability to the Belarusian realities. The long-term intellectual stagnation of russo-centrism, in which no intellectual development has been observed since the second half of the 90s, suggests that it will be quite difficult to find the way out of this critical for russo-centrism situation. The prospects for return of its privileged status also look illusory. Therefore, analysis of russo-centrism can soon completely pass to the sphere of history of ideas, unless there is a significant update of this project (both in ideological and institutional terms).

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CONCEPTS (IDEAS) OF THE BELARUSIAN NATION SINCE GAINING INDEPENDENCE (1990–2009)[2]

The purpose of this paper is to present the research findings concerning the development of the Belarusian nation since gaining independence. Yet, a nation is a complex political and social community with a dynamic structure, on top of which researchers' and intellectuals' methods in studying nations are just as unstable and changeable.

The objective of the proposed paper in this field is quite modest. It basically focuses on studying a particular aspect, namely the concept of the Belarusian nation represented in the intellectual or political and intellectual sphere. To be more precise, the article aims to analyse and systematise the core ideas of the nation that have been consistently present in intellectual and political texts since Belarus obtained sovereignty.

This by no means undermines the importance of representation of *an idea of the nation* on other levels (for example, the one of actual politics or everyday life). Intellectuals may have a considerable influence, but it is not decisive. Apart from that, the relationship between *ideas* and socio-political *practices* is rather complex; and the nature of ideas as social phenomena is an issue of a separate discussion.[3] Moreover, it is obvious that a nation is not "an imagined community", as it is supported not only by ideas or perceptions, but also by institutions,[4] which makes the situation even more complicated.

[1] Passport spelling: Andrei Kazakevich, in Belarusian: Андрэй Казакевіч

[2] The text is based on the findings of a research carried out by the *Political Sphere* Institute in 2008 – 2010. At first, the research was supported by Carnegie Corporation within the program of the CASE Centre, which is a department of European Humanities University, Vilnius. A conflict caused by violations of academic freedoms at EHU led to the Political Sphere Institute cancelling the initial project format and finishing the research on its own. The research group included Aliaksiej Dziermant, Andrej Kazakievič, Aliaksiej Kryvalap, Aliaksiej Lastoŭski and Taćciana Čyžova.

[3] The classics approached this problem in different ways. For example, Weber, on the one hand, stated that innovative ideas could create "a world of representations" and dramatically reformulate a conflict of interests. On the other hand, "thinking patterns" are closely connected with and dependent on evolution of social groups and their interests (Mannheim, 1993: 260-264). A lot of historians keep to a diffusionistic vision, i.e. ideas of leading intellectuals become gradually accepted in wide social strata (see, e.g., Parris, 1960; Hart, 1965 on the influence of Bentham's ideas on the 19th century social policy). This approach, however, is severely criticised too (Skinner, 1974: 280). It is also evident that the influence of ideas on politics strongly depends on the type of leadership (Snare, 1995). For particular study of relationship between ideas and policies, see: King, 1994; Weir, 1994. On ambiguity of the impact of ideas on judges' practices, see: Sherry, 2004.

[4] At least a nation is based on collective representations no more than any other community.

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Nevertheless, the study of the intellectual field seems significant for analysing transformations that national communities have been going through since the collapse of the USSR. Firstly, the ideas formulated by intellectuals to a certain extent influence the development of the community, though we do not tend to overestimate this impact. Secondly - and this is even more important - intellectuals' ideas reflect those fundamental processes taking place on the everyday and political levels, in a concentrated form. Studying the intellectual field has a considerable advantage, as this field is more transparent and analysable. Systematisation of the intellectual field can make an effective foundation for studying the evolution of national community in other social fields.

As mentioned above, the research centres on "intellectual constructs", which are first and foremost in the focus of our attention. As for the disciplinary positioning, the paper comes closest to "the history of (political) ideas." Its general theoretical context is determined by Quentin Skinner's (Skinner, 2002a, b) and Arthur Lovejoy's works, with the latter's concept of a unit-idea in particular (see Lovejoy, 2001: 3–23). For definite analyses of political ideas, see Nisbet, 1994; Grosby, 2002.

Researchers of nationalism also pay attention to ideas, particularly the *idea of a nation*. Most often, however, they take the stance of "diffusionism",[5] approaching intellectuals' ("elites'") ideas as a real "project" that is carried out in the process of nation-building, which is actually a very rare case. They do not study ideas as an independent phenomenon, but only as an element of nationalism as a social and political process, which does not really meet our objectives.[6] In addition, researchers are apt to concentrate on successful cases, ignoring huge bulks of failed or unfulfilled ideas and projects. Considering all this, the theoretical framework of the history of ideas seems more suitable for implementation of the objectives set in the opening paragraphs of this paper.

The choice of the discipline, i.e. the history of ideas, determines the methods and strategies of data processing. First, it is necessary to define what exactly we mean by the idea (concept) of the nation in intellectual and political texts, then we'll set basic principles of choosing texts for analysis, and only after that it is possible to go on to a more detailed analysis of the Belarusian intellectual discourse and the ways a concept of the nation is formulated within its framework.

Research of the Belarusian nation in the context of ideas and intellectual constructs has a certain history, though, unfortunately, the texts seldom consistently meet precise methodological positions.

[5] On diffusionism in the history of ideas, see, in particular: Skinner, 1974:280.

[6] Although the leading authors, such as Anderson, Hobsbawm, Hellner et al. accomplished their fundamental works decades ago, and by the 1990s had already become orthodoxy (Smith, 2001: 49), a lot of Belarusian authors still perceive them as a recent innovation and modern achievement in social science.

Firstly, the problem of nation ("national project", "discourse" or "vision") is all too often mixed up with the foreign policy orientation, electoral behaviour, political ideologies, etc., though these spheres can function quite independently. Secondly, intellectual trends or authors' visions of history are sometimes automatically interpreted as "national projects" or concepts of the nation, which in most cases is erroneous and simply not true.

A political approach is more appropriate for classifying political agendas, ideologies and reform plans. But to our mind, it is not quite efficient for distinguishing the concept of the nation. Such approach is based on the assumption that each political project or ideology is bound to have a coherent "concept of the nation," which often does not correspond to the reality. Firstly, a political agenda, as a rule, is not detailed enough to articulate the idea of the nation. Secondly, the same concept can be shared by different political movements which sometimes stand very far from each other within the political spectrum. Thus, the idea of a "civil" nation can be supported both by democrats and proponents of authoritarianism, while the belief in a "unified Russian people" can be shared between liberals and extreme right-wingers. And vice versa, political movements that stand close to each other can adhere to different concepts of the nation. For example, conservatives can advocate both ethnic and cultural and political concepts.

If we look at the actual political orientations in present-day Belarus, russocentrists can stand for independence, while supporters of the idea of an independent nation can consistently stand for integration with Russia.[7] The division of the political spectrum into "nationalists" and "proponents of the state", "nationalists" and "liberals", etc. is even less meaningful, since all intellectual constructs that formulate a concept of the nation are nationalist by definition.

If we touch upon the ways different concepts of the nation are reflected, at least indirectly, in researchers' texts, we can see that they usually propose their classifications basing to a large extent on their own experiences, perceptions and public debate. Moreover, such classifications tend to refer to different levels, which makes comparison of their conclusions more complicated.[8] They discuss mainly "national projects" or "discourses", which are linked to various political and cultural aspects of Belarusian society and its development. However, in most cases it is political division that seems to be of primary concern, making the basis of their classifications.

In fact, publications on the history of political ideas (political thought) pay little attention to the subject. They either do not discuss the period since 1990

[7] Like Jury Šaŭcoŭ, to give but one example. For his position on the Belarusian nation, see Šaŭcoŭ, 2005: 33–38.

[8] This is particularly true of foreign authors, who tend to make their conclusions on the basis of "relevant" texts or conversations with Belarusian intellectuals.

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(Šalkievič, 2002) or touch upon some fragments that have little to do with concepts of the nation, offering discussions of the national idea and a short overview of ideology of the Belarusian state (Višnieŭskaja, 2004: 252–258).

In analysing the Belarusian society, most social writers and researchers come up with a binary model of cultural and political division in Belarus, i.e. official governmental vs. oppositional discourses (Hansen, 2006), "Slavonic" vs. "European" nationalism (Goujon, 2007), "national/democratic" vs. "post-Soviet/pro-Lukashenka" project (Brzozowska, 2003), "national" vs. "Soviet" strategies of nation building (Leshchenko, 2004).

Sometimes, more complicated models are offered. For example, some researchers distinguish a nativist/pro-European, Muscovite liberal and creole national projects (Ioffe, 2007); or projects based on the ideas of "getting Belarus back into Europe," "Slavonic brotherhood," and "memory of the Great Patriotic War" (Pershai, 2006). "Intellectual discourses of Belarusian identity" can be simply divided into "right", "left" and "centrist" ones (Rudkoŭski, 2008), or researchers can come up with complex models consisting of five intellectual projects that are, unfortunately, distinguished without any precise criteria.[9]

Most of the abovementioned texts contribute to understanding the Belarusian situation, yet, they are not applicable for our analysis in their pure form. Firstly, most of them refer to the analysis of the concepts of the Belarusian nation as a community rather than a political project or agenda. Secondly, our objective is to offer an analysis based on empirical data, at least as much as it is possible.

A Concept of the Nation as an Intellectual Construct

Even if we take the *history of ideas* as the point of reference, a nation remains a rather complicated structure, so we are going to focus on what we see as core elements that determine the logic of the structure and development of the whole construct. These core elements will be referred to as a *concept of the nation*.

There can be more than one answer to the question, "What is the nation?" depending on political orientation, social and cultural background of a certain representative of a national community. Still, the answers are bound to contain some common elements, a kind of *unit-ideas*, which are more stable and reflect the *idea of the nation* in a concentrated form. Of course, distinguishing such *unit-ideas* is an analytical and at the same time quite arbitrary process, which, nonetheless, is in line with our objectives.

[9] A special problem is put forward by distinguishing a postmodern project, the formulation of which is attributed to the authors of a number of books on Belarusian history (Mackievič et al., 2008: 15–25).

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By a concept of the nation we mean the following decisive unit-idea: how the community's borders and elements are determined and what kind of community is viewed as the foundation of the nation. For a concept of the nation to be complete, we are going to outline the public institutions (res publica)[10] that the community is associated with. Thus, within our research, a concept of the nation refers to the community and its public institutions.

The first element of a concept of the nation, i.e. definition of the community, does not seem to require any detailed explanations. What we mean here is the principles and rules according to which the borders of the national community are determined and who is included into the community.

The issue of public institutions is not so simple, so it is worth discussing in detail. A vast majority of definitions of a nation, on both scholarly and popular levels, include a reference to a certain set of institutions. Our research is based on the assumption that a community both as a social phenomenon and an intellectual construct is based on a certain set of institutions. The set itself can vary, including, for example, the origins (race), language, church, cultural tradition, territory, state, etc. In its turn, the state can be "Belarusian," "national," "union," etc. The public institutions do not only consolidate the community, making the foundations of its identity, but also determine collective practices and behaviour, as well as other components of the nation.

On the level of ideas, the set of institutions determines the logic of nation building as an intellectual construct, including formulation of values, projects, interpretations of history and behaviour programmes. In the intellectual field, the combinations of institutions can be infinite, with various unusual, individual and peripheral concepts coming into being alongside conventional ones, which may be shared by wide circles of the community. In theory, an individual intellectual or an ordinary person can formulate his or her own concept of the nation. The only thing that can limit the flight of imagination is the cultural context and principles/values or an intention to destroy them. Unusual concepts or attempts at creating them can resound in the intellectual sphere, still remaining marginal phenomena. All this leads to a problem of setting the canon and criteria for selecting texts for analysis, as well as dividing the authors and concepts into mainstream and peripheral ones.

The Canon and Sampling

Each researcher who studies ideas of a certain period faces the problem of selecting texts and personalities to be analysed. A canon as an acknowledged and legitimate set of authors and their texts recognised by the intellectual or academic tradition as a reflection of "ideas of the period" to a certain extent

[10] Something that belongs to a community (society, a people or a nation).

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simplifies the matter. Alternatively, the number of texts available to researchers may be just too small, which automatically makes the problem of sampling irrelevant (that is the case, for example, with the studies of Belarusian political thought before the 16th century).

At the same time, a lot of authors admit that the canon may not be sufficient, but only a few of them try to extend their analyses, breaking through a conventional set of texts (Skinner, 2002). An obvious problem with analysing the canon may be that it is not representative enough, but at least it has been tested by tradition and practices of forming a coherent corpus of texts. This in any case presupposes at least some degree of critical reading, sampling and ranging the texts.

As for our research, there is obviously no canon for the purposes of analysing political ideas in contemporary Belarus,[11] even on such all-important issues of national thought as "the nation" or "Belarus."[12] The problem of text corpus to provide the basis for our analysis leads to the necessity of choosing an appropriate method to process and structure an extensive database. To make the research more effective, a certain modification of the pure "intellectual field" model is required.

The intellectual field or the field of intellectual production in Belarus is by no means narrow, with the subject of the nation and political ideas being present there on a regular basis. Yet, strange as it may seem, the text corpus on the subject is not wide enough. In addition, if we centre on the intellectual level in its narrow sense, it will result in a noticeable disproportion of the concepts in favour of "national" ones, since advocates of various visions of the Belarusian nation are not similar in representing their intellectual attitude.

Focusing on the academic level might provide a possible solution, but there are not enough relevant studies. As our objective lies in analysing more or less defined intellectual constructs, the modification means including a certain segment of the political field into the intellectual one. To be more precise, it is the segment of intellectualised policies, such as political and social writings and agendas, rather than speeches, commentaries and other regular political routines. Thus, our sample includes books, both academic and popular ones, as well as biographies, educational text books, articles in journals and publications in the media,[13] political and intellectual writings on topical issues, as well as political agendas published in Belarus in 1990–2009.

[11] The existence of the canon of Belarusian political thought is problematic in principle. Modern intellectuals very seldom refer in their reflections to their predecessors. It is also an interesting fact that activists of the Belarusian national revival of the early 20th century did not actually refer to each other in their contemplations and political writings.

[12] For an attempt at systematisation, see An Anthology, 2003; The Belarusian thought of the 20th century, 1998.

[13] Mainly papers, even dailies, such as the "Narodnaja Hazieta" and "Sovetskaya Byelorussiya". It was a typical feature of the 1990s in particular that papers published reflections and strategic texts by intellectuals and politicians, followed by readers' discussions.

After primary selection, about 1000 texts appeared in the analysis field, of which 450 were short-listed after the first round of analysis.[14] This corpus provided the basis for our analysis of concepts of the nation in the intellectual field.

Just as we expected, the analysis revealed a great intellectual variety and presence of different concepts in the intellectual and to a much more limited extent in political spheres, which posed the problem of criteria for sampling.

In our research, the criteria for selecting a concept as a "significant" one were its representation in over 5% of the texts and presence in the texts by at least six authors. Only four concepts met the criteria.[15] Two of them, i.e. ethno-cultural and russo-centrist ones, had a predominantly historical importance and were actively represented in the 1990s, while the other two, i.e. cultural-and-political and state-and-political ones, are relevant today. Their names demonstrate that the concepts are determined by political and cultural institutions. If we name them basing on their key notions, they may be labelled as ethnos-centred, russo-centred, nation-centred and state-centred. The concepts determined can provide a basis for discussing state, cultural, ethnic and russo-centrist nationalisms.

Expectedly, some "projects" that raised remarkable discussions among intellectuals, for example, in the blogosphere, did not fit into this group, having a low representation in the form of completed texts or a limited number of authors. Among them are the concepts of "Lithuanians" (Licvins) in different forms, Kryvian project, Eurasianism, pan-Slavonic, liberal and cosmopolitan concepts, etc.

Concepts of the Belarusian Nation since Gaining Independence

Historical background. From the 19th to the early 20th century, Belarusians were perceived as an ethnic (ethnographical) community, so they could be described, understood and interpreted in ethnic terms only, basing on ethnic (popular) social and cultural institutions. For a number of reasons it was impossible to refer to other political, social and cultural institutions, such as an existing state, "high culture" or the church. In practice, such a reference would have actually meant an automatic shift from the Belarusian to another concept, for example, Russian, Polish, etc.

[14] The size of the article does not allow us to give a detailed description of the sample. It will be provided in a special publication. It has to be pointed out once again that the units of research were texts rather than authors. The latter could change their attitudes as the time went by or affected by the context and circumstances in which the texts were written.

[15] In the article format, we are not providing the precise statistics. However relative the mathematical precision in this field may be, it should be noticed that in absolute numbers "national" concepts prevailed over the state-centred and russo-centrist ones.

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This state of things determined the strategies of "understanding," "awakening" and "revival" of a separate Belarusian people. Virtually all the activists of the Belarusian movement of the late 19th – early 20th centuries viewed "people" (and then "nation") as an ethnic notion, perhaps with some variations (see, for example, Lastoŭski, 1991; Lucevič, 2003; Bahdanovič, 1994; Liosik, 1994: 253–262). The other actors of the political and cultural processes in the region, such as the Polish national movement, the Russian imperial authorities, the Soviet government, etc., approached Belarusians in the same vein.

This ethnic model of understanding the nation (*the national issue*) was basically adopted by the Soviet state. Nations were invariably interpreted as ethno-cultural (ethnographical) communities that represented a new stage in the evolution of *nationality*. The concept of a single *Soviet people* came into being a bit later and had a complicated and unstable relations with the concept of multiple *Soviet nations* even on the ideological level, to say nothing of actual social practices. What we witnessed in the USSR was to a considerable extent a conflict/combination of "Sovieticism"[16] and ethnicity, which took different shapes in the post-war period. Urbanisation, decline of village communities, Sovietisation and Russification undermined "ethnicity", though in some sense Belarus went through a small "ethnic revival" in the 1970s and an upsurge of interest in ethnic culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was characteristic of the whole region.[17]

In the late 1980s, Belarusian intellectuals faced the problem of reformulating the understanding of the nation, which at that time represented a specific combination of the Belarusian ethno-cultural tradition and Sovieticism. Each of the abovementioned concepts can be viewed as a reaction to the challenge posed by the collapse of the Soviet system and creation of a new state.

Ethno-cultural concept of the nation.[18] It is a concept of the nation with a complex of ideas of the Belarusian ethnic community at its core. Thus, the Belarusian ethnos, origins (either real or imaginary) and ethnic culture are thought of as the centre and public institutions of the national community. The ethnic or "popular" concept of the Belarusian nation has a long history. For this reason, its influence is determined not only by the mere idea, but also by the tradition, which, in its turn, made the foundations of the national culture. In the analysed period, it was in the early 1990s that the concept reached its highest point, and then its influence gradually went down, giving way to political concepts. Its most characteristic expressions are found in: Lyč, 1994, pp. 80–89 in particular; Dubaviec, 2003; Konan, 1998 and Sańko, 1999.

[16] Based on russo-centrism.

[17] On the phenomenon of ethnic revival in the West, see Smith, 1995: 158–173.

[18] Its possible alternative names are ethnic and ethnographical, particularly for the Soviet period.

The dominant tendency in Central and Eastern Europe was that the functioning of an ethnos/people[19] provided an immediate basis, reason and motive for a national community to arise. In the 19th – early 20th centuries, all the modern nations in the region were formed according to this model. That is why the influence of popular/ethnic concepts is to a certain extent still noticeable in the countries' culture and policies. At the same time, their modernisation, gaining political sovereignty and collapse of the Soviet system led to a shift towards actualisation of political institutions and culture in a wider, non-ethnic context.

Thus, the community relevant to the concept is the Belarusian people thought of as an ethnic community. For most of its authors, the attributes of community correspond to an academic definition of an ethnos, i.e. common origins, either real or imaginary, language, common history and culture, particularly traditional one. Accordingly, members of an ethnos or people constitute a nation in a natural way, while members of other ethnic groups or peoples form national minorities.

As for public institutions of the nation, in most cases these are an authentic culture, language, *national state* and continuity (origins). However, it should be said that the list is rather a product of reconstruction, as not all of the authors describe public institutions in detail.[20]

Authentic culture and language. The ethnic concept does not offer an exact description of an authentic culture, but outlines a strategy for seeking it in the form of traditional popular culture and (ethnic) history. An authentic culture in the first place refers to traditional social institutions, practices, models of the universe, behaviour codes, folklore and cultural links. It is these phenomena that are viewed as true ones that should be "revived". In pragmatic terms, the "revival" means elevating the social status of ethnic culture, which was traditionally low in the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), expanding its social space through education, politics, the media and cultural activities, and approaching the true culture through the restoration of (ethnic and historical) traditions.[21]

The language plays an important role in the concept, and so does the intention to revive the "true Belarusian language" through a spelling reform and changes in its lexicon and grammar. The language is thought of as an essential social fact, a way of manifesting the tradition and lifestyle, as a world outlook and a natural borderline of a "Belarusian character."

[19] Ethnos is a relatively new term. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, authors used to refer to the people (narod), nationality or a tribe (pliemia).

[20] Siarhiej Dubaviec's formula "the language, the village and Vilnia" that he came up with in 1990 is a good example.

[21] The historical tradition is in the first place the tradition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

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Political organisation of the national community is not paid much attention to, but it is mainly not a very detailed vision of a national state. The national state is a principle on the one hand and a fact of political continuity on the other. As a political principle, the national state should be guided by the interests of the people and guarantee the revival and functioning of the authentic culture. Belarusians are viewed as a state-building nation, which consolidates with or opposes other national communities, depending on their attitude and loyalty to the state.

The emphasis on *direct continuity* is to link the modern state with the political reality of the past. Feeling and knowing this continuity is of great importance for both building and legitimising the modern state. Thus, for the ethno-cultural concept, the national state primarily stands for (direct) political continuity with certain political institutions of the past. It is in this case only that the state is utterly true and authentic. For the authors of the early 1990s, the legitimate political institutions of the past were the Princedom of Polack, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Belarusian People's Republic and (a bit later) pre-Christian/pre-Slavonic times.[22] The institutions of the Russian Empire, the USSR, sometimes the Polish Commonwealth and even the Republic of Belarus[23] were denied authenticity.

The origins are the least definite public institution of the ethnical concept. The Belarusian nation first and foremost includes original Belarusians, but the meaning of the notion is not precisely outlined. The concept itself seems to be grounded in such a state of things when the ethnos/people was a priori a natural community, determined by cultural markers, social status and nationality as recorded in passports, so it did not require any additional explanations. The authors never actually appeal to "blood;" more important seem the cultural and political continuity, as well as recognition of the culture and behaviour codes for quite a long period of time.[24]

Cultural-and-political concept.[25] It is based on understanding the nation as a political and cultural community. Its political dimension represents connection with certain political institutions, such as, for example, the institute of citizenship, while the cultural one stands for common cultural symbols, practices and understanding of history. A gradual rise of the concept started in the mid 1990s, so that in the mid 2000s it began to prevail. Its charac-

[22] Certain elements of such vision were shaped in the 1970s – 1980s, but it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that it was brought into the focus of real public attention (Kryvaĺcevič, 1999). Its strategic text is Sańka, 1993.

[23] Also due to the fact that the modern Republic of Belarus has very few signs of direct continuity with the states of the past.

[24] The issue of "blood" is thoroughly analysed only in a quite new almanac Druvis, but some of its authors noticeably depart from the concept of "Belarusianness", so their inclusion into the ethno-cultural concept of the Belarusian nation seems problematic.

[25] National or national-democratic one.

teristic early manifestations are found in Pliska, 1999, especially pp. 26–31; Hlušakoŭ, 1999, pp. 122–124 in particular; Jaskievič, 1998; Babosaŭ, 1998: 63–66.

Historically, the concept is strongly linked to the ethno-cultural one, but it offers a different strategy of national consolidation. The cultural-and-political concept was able to get shaped only due to the establishment of the *independent Belarusian state*, which provided the basis for shifting to a different model of understanding Belarus, Belarusian and Belarusianness. Certain elements of the cultural-and-political concept were present even before the 1990s in the form of "the BSSR patriotism."[26] But it is only since gaining independence that this stance has become institutionally grounded and acquired a mobilising potential.

For the cultural-and-political concept, the nation is a community of citizens of Belarus. At the same time, it is pointed out that citizens make a cultural community, with national culture as an integrated element of the nation. The nation's public institutions are an independent state (country), national culture and political continuity.

The authors of the cultural-and-political concept pay quite a lot of attention to the political structure of the community and state. They view the public institution of the (independent) state not only as a sum of governmental bodies and power, but also as a country, a system of social and political institutions, such as civil society, political organisations, regions, religions, the state apparatus, etc.[27] The adjective *independent* stresses that the state is free from immediate dependence on other countries, so the concept opposes the idea of "union" sovereignty or union statehood, which was pronounced in the 1990s by the proponents of Belarus – Russia integration or restoration of the USSR. *Political independence* and *national sovereignty* are viewed as basic attributes of statehood. Pointing out that Belarus depends on Russia to a considerable degree, a number of authors traditionally pose a question whether the modern Republic of Belarus can be called an independent state, which was particularly typical of the 1990s.

The other important public institution is *national culture*. The state and national community should not (and cannot) be culturally neutral in the same way as it can be neutral, for example, towards religious institutions. For the cultural-and-political concept, a certain culture represents integrated

[26] Manifestations of civil patriotism were present even in Zianon Paźniak's early texts, "Let us not forget that all of us make the Nation. Russians, Jews, Poles and Tatars – all of us. Never forget about it!" (Paźniak, 1998).

[27] Apart from a number of democratic (or republican, to be more precise) configurations, a certain subordinated position of the state among the public institutions is explained by the fact that a part of the concept was formulated by the people who did not belong to the governmental institutions or took a critical attitude to them, sometimes even refusing to recognise the Republic of Belarus as a "normal" state because of its political regime.

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part of the nation, being as important as the state for making it a real community. The Belarusian cultural tradition formed in the 20th century is placed at the basis of the concept.

Though, while the ethno-cultural concept centres on a search for authentic (true) culture, the cultural-and-political one takes a bit different approach. Something that can be called the *experience principle* substitutes the criterion of authenticity. Different cultures within the Belarusian context can be interpreted as Belarusian, making part of the national culture.[28] The strategy allows including, for example, Polish-language authors of the 19th century, "West-Rusism", the Soviet past and other elements of Belarusian/local/regional cultural experience into the national culture, though they may not be directly linked with the ethnic Belarusian character. Great prominence is also given to the Belarusian language. Russian within the cultural-and-political concept is viewed as a means of communication, but only as an operational phenomenon and, unlike in russo-centrism, never as a value. Thus, Russification is not perceived as something "normal."[29]

A similar strategy is applied to the institution of *symbolic continuity*. The presence and a sense of political continuity with the past, as well as understanding the nation as a historical community still play an important role. For the cultural-and-political concept, however, continuity is not grounded in authenticity, unlike it is in the ethno-cultural one. Quite different political and social institutions can be included into the "historical heritage" of the national community, though the value of some corpuses of experiences is actively debated. This allows combining traditional elements of historical legacy, such as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Princedom of Polack and the Belarusian People's Republic with more ambivalent components in terms of political and cultural development, such as the BSSR, interwar Poland, even the Russian Empire, etc.

State-and-political concept. It is based on understanding the nation as citizens or population of the Republic of Belarus. The main political institutions are the state, Soviet cultural and political continuity and ethnographic distinctions. The fact that the concept has found its way into the top four is to a great extent explained by the state sponsorship, which supports different publications that fit into the "ideology of the Belarusian state." This has a considerable impact on their contents.[30] The concept is probably more vague and situational than the others. Its typical manifestations are found in: *Belarusian model...*, 2003, particularly pp. 3–8, 46–50; Mieĺnik, 2007.

[28] A characteristic example of such strategies can be found in the concept of trans-culturality. See Babkoŭ, 1999.

[29] The language is a subject of never-ending debate.

[30] On the process of creating the Belarusian state ideology, see Kazakievič, 2007. On the intellectual context, see Kazakievič, 2004.

The background of the state-and-political concept can be debatable. It is a quite new phenomenon, shaped at the time of sovereignty, though it can be partially considered a continuation of the Soviet republican patriotism (the BSSR people), the idea of the "Soviet people" and even "localness" as a strategy of avoiding any definite cultural identification.[31] The concept had some degree of representation in the early 1990s, particularly in political texts, when the disoriented elites were trying to adapt themselves to the new cultural and political situation. In 1994, the concept gave way to russo-centrism, which at the time could be considered the official state ideology (Kazakievič, 2005: 132–133). A real upsurge in the representation of the state-and-political concept in the political and cultural field was observed after 2003, when the government launched the project of "Belarusian state ideology".

On the one hand, the concept technically approaches "pure" civil nationalism, since all the population of a certain territory is included into the nation, irrespective of their origins, religion, culture, etc. Yet, this principle is theoretical only and is not implemented in practice.[32] On the other hand, the principle of "citizenship" in the state-and-political concept is very seldom steadily adhered to in the texts, when their authors go on from declaring the general principle to specific details.[33] Very often only eastern Slavs or "our people" according to some other criteria, like political loyalty or conforming to the dominant behaviour pattern, can be true citizens. For example, Catholics, Poles and opposition supporters are often regarded as "not quite our people." In addition, the state-and-political concept may be formally declared to be culturally neutral, but it is not the case in practice. To be more precise, its neutrality usually equals to distancing itself from the Belarusian culture, whereas the Soviet and to a certain extent Russian contexts evidently play a significant role, which is far from neutral.[34]

Unlike the other concepts where various elements have a relatively equal status, the state-and-political concept has its distinct centre in the form of public institutions of the state and periphery consisting of much less important elements.

Thus, the core public institution is the *state* as power and the whole complex of state bodies. Within this concept, the state is mainly a structure that exists in space, its representation in time, i.e. historical continuity being out-

[31] There was a fruitful discussion of the problem at a research seminar held by the Political Sphere journal in 2008.

[32] It is not fully implemented even in the countries where immigration laid the foundations of the nation, such as, for example, the USA, Latin America, Australia, etc.

[33] An indicative example: Mieĺnik, 2007.

[34] Such a strategy was to some extent typical of the Soviet tradition, when phenomena that contradicted each other, like, for example, democracy and dictatorship, humanism and violence, sovereignty and subordination to the metropolis were included in one concept. This makes the construct contradictory, but at the same time flexible.

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lined quite faintly. The state is viewed as a certain territory and power that dominates it (Kazakievič, 2005: 138). In this respect it is different from a "conventional" civil nation, since the significance is given to state institutions, rather than civil society.

Like any other "civil" concept of the nation, the state-and-political concept is not culturally neutral. Its subsidiary cultural institution is S*oviet political and cultural continuity*. Sovietness and the Soviet past are viewed not only as a norm but also as a value. The concept underlines its continuity with Soviet practices in the social sphere and economy. The political system of the BSSR is regarded as a source of valuable experience and a starting point of statehood. Certain historical events of the Soviet period are worshipped as landmarks in national history. However, apart from the Great Patriotic War (World War II) and some other fragments of Soviet history, the concept does not offer a comprehensive vision of history. Accepting Russification as a normal practice and even "patriotic" attitude toward the old Soviet empire could serve as examples of Soviet continuity.

One way or another, the concept has to deal with the problem of Belarusian culture. There is no consensus on this issue, but as a rule it is given the status of an ethnographic peculiarity. The existence and some value of Belarusian culture may not be denied, but it is mainly interpreted as an ethnographic folklore phenomenon. As a result, the social space of such culture should be limited to a few separate spheres like history, literature, etc. When the ethnographic culture (language) exceeds these boundaries, it is treated as something weird and abnormal, or as a sign of "nationalism."

Russo-centrism.[35] It is a concept of the nation based on the presumption that there is a single *Russian people*, which consists of Great Russians, Little Russians, i.e. Ukrainians, and White Russians, i.e. Belarusians.[36] To a certain degree, there is a problem in defining whether this construct can be treated as a concept of the *Belarusian* nation. The main problem is that the "centre" of the community (people or nation) is placed outside Belarus, which makes the concept ambiguous (Kazakievič, 2005: 21). Its typical examples are Kryštapovič, 1999; Traščanok, 2006 and Traščanok, 2002.

As a rule, Belarusian russo-centrists do not give a detailed description of their construct, but keep repeating the formulas of the "triple unity" and a "Russian super-ethnos." These structures are not transparent or stable in determining a precise type of relations between its components. That is why the question of what nation is meant here remains open. The public institutions of russo-centrism are usually the "union state," Russian culture (civilisation), ethnographic or regional distinctions and Russian origins.

35 Possible alternative names: pan-Rusism or West-Rusism.

36 Sometimes, "Rusyns" are added to the list.

Russo-centrism is a rather old concept in Belarus. It had been finally shaped as a political phenomenon in the form of West-Rusism by the mid 19th century (Ćvikievič, 1993). It was partially a trend popular among scholars of Belarusian origin, but it was also an official practice of the imperial government following the 1863–1864 uprising and aimed at "Russifying" the province. The imperial government and the scholars had not been able to work out a single approach by the early 20th century. Belarusians could be recognised as a separate tribe or nationality or they could be considered as "just Russians."[37]

When the Soviet regime came into power, it was admitted that West-Rusism was a form of Russian "superpower chauvinism" and it lost its official status. The logic of this concept, however, was revived in the 1930s in the form of a new Soviet ideology based on russo-centrism. In the early 1990s russo-centrism in Belarus took a new shape as a combination of Soviet russo-centrism, Russian nationalism and attempts to restore the 19th century West-rusism. From 1994 until the early 2000s, russo-centrism was in fact an official ideology, which lost its leading position only as a result of an "ideological change of direction" after 2001 (Kazakievič, 2005: 132). Since then, the significance of the concept has been declining steadily, so at present it seems peripheral.

The main political institution within the concept is the *union state*. As the community of the *Russian people* does not fit into the cultural and social borders of Belarus, its sovereignty also requires an external centre. The union state should include all the *people*, though its parts can enjoy territorial autonomy. The "union" functions as a symbol and an ideal rather than a mere political agenda. It is more important than its parts. Such an understanding of state sovereignty is very similar to the Soviet model of federation, where the republics were recognised as independent entities, but at the same time they were directly controlled by the metropolis. Not surprisingly, the authors of the concept usually see the USSR as a successful and reference model of a "union state".

The same logic determines their attitudes to culture. *Russian culture (civilisation)* as a public institution is not only important, but also represents a much bigger value than the regional versions. In theory, Russian culture can differ from the Great Russian one. However, in practice or when it comes

[37] The late 19th century overview see in: Pypin, 1892: 3–4. The official governmental circles usually denied the existence of a special Belarusian "people," while for ethnographers, linguists et al. its existence was a "scientific fact." The situation is well reflected in M. Muravyov's statement of 1864, "*The disastrous idea of division of nationalities in Russia and introduction of Little Russian, White Russian and other dialects has already become widespread in the public opinion. This should be put an end to and the Minister of Public Education should be obliged to act in the spirit of Russian unity, banning ideas that contradict it from educational establishments.*" (Quoted from: Komzolova, 2005: 107)

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to details, they are identical. Thus, only the Russian Orthodox Church can be recognised as the true Orthodoxy, and so on. Moreover, specific local features are often viewed as separatism and a threat to the union's integrity.[38] The ethno-cultural concept unequivocally treats Russian culture as something *alien*, the state-and-political one accepts it as a norm, the cultural-and-political concept selects only those parts of it that are connected with the Belarusian context, whereas russo-centrism sees Russian culture as an important and indisputable value. Consequently, the process of Russification is viewed not only as something normal, but also as an exclusively positive development, which facilitates cultural and political integration of the Russian people and advance of its civilisation.

Ethnographic (regional) distinctions may not be denied, but they are marginalised. This practice is strengthened by a critical attitude to the Belarusian language and cultural tradition, particularly if it includes "non-Russian" and "non-Orthodox" components. Thus, ethnographic and regional distinctions are of certain value for the *Russian people* as manifestations of cultural variety; however, their full-scale functioning in society poses a threat to the Russian unity. In this situation, the Soviet model of limiting national cultures to ethnographic distinctions only and constraining them within certain spheres, such as literature and the humanities, is regarded as a desirable pattern. The radical versions consider a possibility of complete assimilation (integration).

The concept defines Belarusians as part of the *Russian people* which is basically an ethnic formation, where ethnic origins and religion are of great importance. Common origin determines natural boundaries of the Russian people, as well as the community's political, cultural and social shape. As for the details, the authors of the concept cannot find a common ground here. Just like in Russian nationalism in its extreme forms, we can notice both ethnic tendencies and super-ethnic imperial aspirations.

Some Conclusions

The research has demonstrated a relative variety of concepts of the nation in the Belarusian intellectual and political field, at least in the light of stereotypes of a homogenous *idea of the* nation in established national communities, to which Belarusians undoubtedly belong.[39]

Four concepts were able to meet the criterion of significance set by the research. These are ethno-cultural, cultural-and-political, state-and-political and russo-centrist concepts, each of them with its history, as well as intellec-

[38] For example, the authors of the concept can deny the existence of the Belarusian language and label its literary version as "artificial," "alien," and "unnecessary." Yet, this view is aired by the most radical authors only, and mainly in texts or speeches aimed at Russian audience.

[39] In all probability, for most modern nations, the stereotype contradicts the reality.

tual and (quasi)political circles. Each concept is important for understanding the development of the Belarusian society or at least the Belarusian intellectual field since gaining independence. From the historical perspective, the "political" concepts are gradually becoming more and more influential, while the ethnic and especially russo-centrist ones are being marginalised.

The research findings definitely reflect certain essential processes in the national development, though further research is required in order to give their detailed description. It should also be remembered that the actual scene of concepts of the nation can be distorted by a variety of factors. For example, the number of texts and authors representing a concept may indicate high productivity of its proponents, rather than real popularity of the idea among intellectuals and politicians. The number of texts and their contents may be influenced by such factors as the state order or grant policies, yet, in our opinion, such "distortions" cannot deform the basic structure of the intellectual field viewed from the perspective of the twenty-years period. Moreover, once the structure is determined, the "distortions" can make an interesting subject for research, which would help to get a clearer understanding of how the *ideas of the nation* and national *identity* function in modern Belarus.

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SOCIAL THOUGHT IN 1960s-1970s' BELARUS: HISTORY, NATION AND INDEPENDENCE

Creating a chronology of the history of post-war Belarus, we will certainly consider the general periodization of the history of the Soviet Union. Naturally, accentuation of the periods of Stalin's Terror, Khrushchev's Thaw and Brezhnev Stagnation is similarly valid for determination of the history of the BSSR. But these definitions of the grand narrative are not able to characterize the specifics of the Belarusian history. After all, there is a history of social thought, which has manifested itself in its diversity, despite the seeming monotony of the intellectual life. Considering the cost of the printed word in the Soviet era, we shall use only published texts for analysis of the sentiments of social thought.

The Academic Discussion of the Mid 1960s: Forming the Postulates

The mid-1960s were notorious for an unprecedented for the Soviet Belarus public historiographic debate. Besides, some names symbolic for the present times were also actualized during those events.

The immediate impetus for the debate was the publication of the work by Aliaksandr Koršunaŭ (rus. Korshunov) on the Orthodox writer, polemicist, and the church leader of the first half of the 17th century Athanasius Filipovič (Koršunaŭ, 1965). But appearance of controversy is associated with the name of the author of the review on this book, the Belarusian literary critic Mikola Praškovič.

Praškovič himself was quite a colourful figure (for details see: Čamiarycki, 2004: 149-152). As a specialist in Ancient Belarusian Literature, he worked at the Institute of Literature named after Janka Kupala, at the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR. In 1965, Praškovič defended his candidate's dissertation on the early period of work of Simeon of Polack. Thus, he could develop himself in the professional sphere. But, as noted by all who knew him, Praškovič had a temper that was difficult to lock in an academic environment. In the same way, Praškovič's review (1965: 174-177) on Koršunaŭ's academic work appeared to be polemically sharp, suspended the official views and was subjected to a wide publicity in Belarus.

In general, Praškovič rated Koršunaŭ's work quite highly, but rather scathingly criticized some historical stereotypes inculcated by the semiofficial propaganda. Thus, referring to Koršunaŭ's statement that "*bearing in mind*

[1] Passport spelling: Aleh Dziarnovich, in Belarusian: Алег Дзярновіч

the interests of the lower classes, he [Athanasius Filipovič – A.Dz.] went to Moscow to seek protection from Catholic aggression and tyranny," the reviewer evaluated this thesis as "at least frivolous". Further on, Praškovič wrote more bluntly: "*With his whole flow of thought, the researcher affirms that the Orthodox monk wanted to trade espionage information to the orthodox king for material assistance to Kupiatits Monastery*" near Pinsk, where Filipovič lived for some time. And for the "*Orthodox monk, the Union was certainly a deadly evil. He wanted help from the Orthodox king to destroy the abhorrent Union. The social liberation is out of the question.*"

The very idea of the Church Union was viewed by Praškovič quite positively: "*The religious struggle, mutual intrigues, blackmailing, bribes and accusations weakened the already weak Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which was forced to join the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569. The most prudent people, realizing the harm and danger of internal contradictions, found the only way out of this predicament: to unite the Orthodox and the Uniates (Greek Catholics – A.Dz.) in the church council by mutual concessions, and create a Patriarchate for Belarus and Ukraine with the center in Kyiv. Indeed, it was at that time a very progressive idea. Creation of such patriarchate would firstly cease internal religious problems in the country, and secondly, would pull the Uniates out of the Jesuits' influence. But. As fairly pointed out by Koršunaŭ, this idea turned out to be a utopia.*" In general, Praškovič noted that "*Koršunaŭ's view of the Union (Church Union – A.Dz.) is obsolete and one-sided.*" And "*he takes the purposes of introducing the Union for its ultimate result.*"

Also, the issues of terminology - so relevant even today - drew Praškovič's attention. Here, it is important to understand that the discussion around the semantic field of terms "Lithuania" (Litva) and "Lithuanian" (Litoŭski) is by no means an invention of Mikoła Jermałovič and practice of the 1980s-1990s. The example with Praškovič demonstrates that these issues were raised in the academic environment as early as in the 1960s. In continuation, here is another typical terminological passage by Praškovič: "*Identification of the term 'Russian' from the times of Kyivan Rus' with its current meaning has also led Korshunaŭ to a misunderstanding. Thus, he affirms that the St. Sofia Cathedral in Kyiv is the 'pride of the Russian people'. Of course, Koršunaŭ had in mind all the East Slavs of Kyivan Rus'. Then, apparently, he should have said so clearly.*"

One has to have a good understanding of the specifics of the Soviet - including scientific - press of those years. The thought pronounced there represented not just the voice of the author, but also the position of the edition which had the official approval for publication. Mikoła Praškovič's review was published at the very end of 1965, and in February 1966 the main official newspaper of the BSSR "Sovetskaya Byelorussiya" printed a critical feedback

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on this review by quite unrenowned postgraduates Uladzimir Liukievič and Jakaŭ Traščanok (1966). Yes, this is the same Traščanok, who in another era will be rated as one of the most significant representatives of the "directive historiography" (see: Smaliančuk, 2006: 56-64; Smaliančuk, 2007: 351-361; Naša Niva, 2003).

Polemically disagreeing with some theses of Mikola Praškovič's review, primarily on the possible positive evaluation of the project of the Church Union, the reviewers took the liberty to obviously hyperbolize and hypertrophy Praškovič's views. In particular, they attributed Praškovič with affirmation that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a Belarusian and Ukrainian state, which does not correspond to the text of the Belarusian philologist. But, more importantly, these authors allowed themselves political assessments of the discussed text: *"The fudge about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania [in lowercase letters in the original – A.Dz.], that in that state the Belarusian people lived in prosperity, that the Union was a specifically Belarusian religion is not original or new. Its complete scientific failure and questionable political significance has long been disclosed by the Soviet historians. Therefore, the appearance of these false allegations in the pages of "Polymia" ("Flame") can not but cause surprise."* And further on more bluntly: *"We do not believe that the editorial board of 'Polymia' share the 'historical concepts' of M. Praškovič, but are convinced that they have to remember their duties to carefully read all the materials printed in the magazine. It is not appropriate for a basic literary, artistic and socio-political magazine to provide their pages for promotion of views that distort the history of the Belarusian people and have nothing to do with science."*

The status of the publication raises questions. This very critical text was placed just under the heading "Letter to the editor." Could critical texts by unknown postgraduates get in the pages of the main newspaper of the BSSR so easy in those days? The subsequent events show that the publication was only a part of a planned action. As noted by literary historian Viačaslaŭ Čamiarycki, Praškovič's publication provoked a sharply negative reaction from the main semi-official historian Laŭren Abecadarski and his associates. His article in 1966 served as the basis for a special scientific debate at the Academy of Sciences on the issues of Belarusian statehood, assessment of the role of the Church Union in the history of the Belarusian people, and others. (Čamiarycki, 2004: 149).

Adam Maĺdzis, recalling the atmosphere of that discussion, noted that the first time Praškovič came under a "significant trial" in the large conference hall of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences after publishing his review on Koršunaŭ's book in "Polymia" (Maĺdzis, 2003). According to Maĺdzis, Praškovič in his review "*criticized Orthodoxy and cautiously praised Uniatism, which at that time was considered a great sedition.*" All this "*gave reason to the*

two careful postgraduates from the provinces, Liukievič and Traščanok, to accuse Praškovič in Belarusian nationalism in 'Sovetskaya Byelorussiya'. A command was received from the top: to sort it out, to condemn." The "trial" lasted for two days, as a real international scientific conference. *"The hall was full, because many attended such trials as theatrical spectacles. But young people supported Praškovič – some with a word, and some with applause. Therefore, each party considered itself both the winner and the loser."* It will be interesting to note that Koršunaŭ was the one feeling most "awkward", because "*although the review seemed to praise his book, he was required to dissociate himself from the reviewer...*" But despite the validity of one or the other position, all the leaders - from the science department of the Central Committee of the KPB (the Communist Party of Belarus) to newspaper editors and directors of academic institutions - began to treat Praškovič cautiously. He broke an unwritten rule of loyalty - triggered a public debate.

Belarusian philosopher Uladzimir Konan in his memoirs adds other features of that discussion (Konan, 2008). We can see that not all of the scientific community was ready to just passively accept the ideological guidance, and the unwinding intrigue was not one-sided: *"It was then that the Bolshevik ideologist of 'Sovetskaya Byelorussiya' Abecadarski got entrapped: he agreed to participate in an academic debate on the dispute. Though even I, then inexperienced assistant, understood that Abecadarski with his academic followers will be isolated."* Everything turned out according to Konan - literary critics, historians, philosophers were delivering speeches one after another, and having paid the service tribute to the official atheism and Marxist-Leninist dialectics, having gently criticized Praškovič for "Unionphilism" and polemical exaggerations, "*quite thoroughly, though politely criticized Abecadarism (orig.: Abecadarščyna). Lauren was entirely boiling inside, but was at first keeping cool as Kuliašoŭ's 'young man under interrogation', repeating his well-known arguments and theses."*

As Konan recollects, somewhere in the middle of the debate a portly young man with an open and calm face came out to the podium. He did not look like an ordinary, ever stooped scientist with his 83-ruble pay. "'*I am an artist Liavon Barazna - presented himself an unknown to the public speaker. – I am not an academic scholar, but know something about the issue of the dispute.' And within formal correctness, but without those compromising 'however', 'nevertheless', 'on the one hand and on the other hand', showed all unscientificness of Abecadarism and convincingly proved correctness of Praškovič's statements."*

As we can see, public debate in the mid 1960s could still develop in an uncontrolled way, violating the planned scenario of condemnation. As a result, being quite confident in the university auditory, Laŭren Abecadarski "*exploded, seemed to be shouting something, finally shook his finger menacin-*

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gly at everyone (in translation into the official 'Bolshevik-NKVD language' that gesture apparently meant: 'You just wait, bloody hell, I will show you who you are!'), and left the academic amphitheater."

But the editors of "Polymia" magazine neither remained voiceless in this pressing situation. Philosopher Mikola Alieksiutovič using the name of the text in "Sovetskaya Byelorussiya", published his detailed article "But where is the objective truth?" in "Polymya" (Alieksiutovič, 1966: 179-185). Already at the beginning of his text, the author formulated the crucial problems, due to which the debate turned so hot: "*The negative reaction to the review of M. Praškovič has its own explanation. The thing is that even nowadays there is a category of people who fail to understand that not everything related to the activities of Russian tsars and the Orthodox Church was progressive. Therefore, everything that came to us from the countries of Western Europe (and even from Slavic Poland) is perceived by them as evil.*" Further, the author amplifies his thought: "*This is the reason of curses to all Catholics and praises to the Orthodox leaders, convictions of foreign monarchs and feudal lords and bows to the Russian tsar and landlords, curtseys to the Russian feudal state and suspicious attitude to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which by its ethnographic composition, territory and culture was predominantly Belarusian.*"

It is fully appropriate that in the mid 1960s the Belarusian philosopher based his views on the Marxist method. And indeed, if to strictly keep within this methodology, there is no place for the unconcealed sympathies for the Russian tsarism and obscurantism. Belarusian intellectuals of the Soviet era actively used such scenario of discussion.

As noted by Alieksiutovič, "*all abovementioned leads us to the most important issue raised by U. Liukievič and J. Traščanok in their article. It is the question of the state.*" Alieksiutovič quotes Liukievič and Traščanok: "*The Belarusian people obtained statehood only through the victory in the Great October Socialist Revolution.*" But Alieksiutovič uses this thesis only to shift the discussion to another direction, breaking the hard-lined schemes of Liukievič and Traščanok: "*If the authors had clarified - the socialist statehood - there would be no reason for dispute. But a little earlier they claim that in the 13th century, Lithuanian feudal lords integrated the western areas of Rus', weakened by heavy fighting against Mongol-Tatars and German 'dogs-knights', into their state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.*" But precisely in these lands, as Alieksiutovič noted, from the 14th century, the Belarusian nation began to form. And the "*Lithuanian and then Polish magnates kept the local feudal lords with all their rights and privileges, thus providing themselves with social support.*"

Thus, Alieksiutovič poses a rhetorical question: "*So, what do we have: there were West Russian lands that were fighting against strangers, but there was no state. Who inhabited these lands: savages organized in clans, kins, or people who were already familiar with the state system? It is seen from the article of U.*

Liukievič and J. Traščanok that these lands were already ruled by feudal lords, but there was …no state. And suddenly Lithuanian feudal lords just took these sparse lands and included them in their state. Where is the logic in this?"

Perhaps such argumentation, after passionate debate in 1980s-1990s looks a bit simplistic, but that was actually the first relatively free - meaning not under such rigid pressure - historiographic debate in post-Stalin Soviet Belarus. And the style of the era itself demanded appealing to the obvious things.

One phrase from Mikola Alieksiutovič's article can be considered a refrain to all that debate: "*…one can not just simply cross out few centuries of the history of the Belarusian people only because at the relevant time there was no ethnographic term 'Belarus' yet.*"

Concerning the history of the pogrom of the "Academic environment", it is well described (detailed description: Čarniaŭski, 1999: 55-64; Čarniaŭski, 2004: 196-204; see also: Antanovič, 1991; Kaŭrus, 1993; Misko, 1994 ; Rabkievič, 1995; Lyč and Navicki, 1996: 374-375; Dziarnovič, 2004: 11-13). Those events have also left archival sources in open archives (expulsion of V. Rabkievič from the CPSU: NARB Fund 447, inventory 4, case 2: p. 81; case 6: pp. 52-54; materials on employees of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR: NARB Fund 4, inventory 20, case 518: p. 248). We should give a little more detail on the fate of Mikola Praškovič, since his text was in the heart of the debate and provoked such response. Viačaslaŭ Čamiarycki wrote that Praškovič was a trustful, open and unnecessarily emotional man who was used by the special agencies, "*under the watchful eye of which he was kept*," for discrediting some national patriots, fabrication of the case and "revealing" a "nest of Belarusian nationalists" at the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR ("Academic environment") in 1973-1974. As a result, along with Praškovič suffered a whole group of Belarusian scientists, especially Alieś Kaŭrus, Sciapan Misko, Valiancin Rabkievič and Michaś Čarniaŭski, who were dismissed from their jobs and could not find employment anywhere in their specialty for a long time. On a charge of Belarusian nationalism in 1974, Praškovič was also dismissed from his job at the Academy of Sciences. For some time he was unemployed, then worked as a loader, as a proofreader in "Rodnaya Pryroda" ("Our Nature") magazine and "Vecherniy Minsk" ("The Evening Minsk") newspaper. In 1982, he left the job for health reasons. Praškovič tragically died in a fire in his home village (Čamiarycki, 2004: 150).

Adam Maĺdzis evaluates some character weakness of our hero more bluntly: "*[Praškovič] is earthly, peasant-like, trustful Belarusian maximalist. Even postgraduate studies at the Leningrad Pushkin House*[2] *did not deprive Praškovič of his peasant naivety. He could tell anyone about his correspondence with Ukrainian patriots, about him collecting money for them fired from their jobs.*

[2] "Pushkin House": Institute of Russian Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (Russian Academy of Sciences).

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He could invite anyone - for just being Belarusian-speaking - to his postgraduate room, and then to a studio flat in Kuibyshev Street."

Praškovič was single, so to meet at his place - in the room, and later in the flat - was advantageous, and sometimes with no alternatives. Young scientists, mostly recent migrants from rural areas, had simply no other opportunity to meet outside of work. And then "*someone often intentionally began political fantasies: like who will be which minister when we come to power. Most of us took it as a game.*" But it was quite a risky game for that time: "*And Praškovič as the owner was sitting and listening, sometimes naively echoed, not realizing that someone needed this to get promoted. And from above came the pressure...*"

Dismissed, for long time Praškovič had no work, and "*to have something to eat, he sometimes visited the Karatkievičs and us. Then he somehow got a job as a proofreader. Praškovič died tragically: he lit a cigarette in his native house in Biarezina region, lay down on bed and burnt...*" (Maĺdzis, 2003).

Samizdat of the 1970s: Formulation of Political Objectives

The tragic story of Mikola Praškovič not only illustrates the hard choice of the humanities scientist, but also shows us what weight the written word and bravely expressed - despite the circumstances - thought of the researcher had at the time. During the debate of the mid 1960s those abstracts of the Belarusian historiography were clearly voiced, which will continue to be the target of propaganda campaigns - particularity of the history of Belarus, its difference from the Russian and Polish visions of history; cultural - including religious - distinctiveness of Belarus; the importance of presence of the Western (Latin) civilization for the socio-cultural space. For more than a century, these virtually neutral points of view remain the irritant points for the followers of West-Rusism and its modern primitive versions (we shall note also that the founders of West-Rusism in the middle of the 19th century wrote exactly about the cultural distinctiveness of the region).

But such public debates on historiographic matters, as occurred in mid 1960s, could not get into the pages of legal publications in 1970s, after the pogrom at the Academy of Sciences and other intellectual circles. Therefore, samizdat starts to circulate actively, determining the specificity of social activity of the period. The turning point in this were the events of the first half – mid 1970s: the pogrom of the "Academic environment" and the public reaction to repressions. As a result, political samizdat - including the periodic one - appeared in Belarus. The peculiarity of spreading of these uncensored, socially significant texts lies in the fact that their reproduction takes place outside of the author's control, in the course of their circulation in the readers' environment. While copying of the uncensored literature became possible through introduction of a typewriter into the life of the Soviet man (Daniel, 2005: 29).

The analytical review “The Situation in Belarus. 1974” signed by Hienrych Rakutovič - a pseudonym behind which was Zianon Paźniak - can be evaluated as a real information explosion. The analytical review began with a request: “*Destruction of our intellectuals by KGB takes place in utter silence. If these pages fall into the hands of our brothers and confederates from other Soviet republics who possess greater opportunities of communication and information, we hope for their solidarity and support.*” The author of the text describes the situation in Belarus in the early 1970s with the help of strong images: “*The policy of violence and deception is carried on in Belarus, almost unabatedly, since the 1930s. In the times of so-called ‘Khrushchev’s democracy’ we were not able to fully rehabilitate the majority of our national political figures, writers and poets. Violence and lies have formed a very specific situation in the country. As such, we are still neck-deep in the blood of the 1930s. Physical and moral losses were total and so significant that our generation feels them constantly.*” Reprints and photocopies of the review were spread across Belarus and abroad.

In 1975, Mikola Jermalovič also starts regular production of his underground periodical “Hutarki” (“Conversations”). In fact, “Hutarki” were continuation of a handwritten magazine “Padsniežnik” (“Snowdrop”) published by Jermalovič during 1963-1964 (four issues published), but suspended after Nikita Khrushchev’s dismissal from power, when a climate of suspicion and reveal was established in public life.

“Hutarki” were published by Mikola Jermalovič under the pseudonym of Symon Bielarus during 1975-1976 (for technical specifications of the publication see: Laŭryk and Androsik, 1998: 25-30). As of today, in total 48 issues are known to have been published.[3] The publication’s motto was “On everything that hurts”. This motto was sometimes perceived by the readers as a parallel name of the publication. In addition, the first page contained an epigraph from Janka Kupala “Only such conversation goes around…”

Both in the title of the publication and in its structure and principles of presenting information, Jermalovič directly appealed to the tradition of a particular category of works in Belarusian literature of the 19th century. “Hutarki” at that time were publicist and agitation, often anonymous works, which covered topical social problems or issues of public morality. Written in a fictionalized form or as a conversation of two or more persons, the 19th century “Hu-

[3] “Hutarki” both as separate editions and as preserved and available package, were reprinted several times. The first publication was carried out by Mikola Jermalovič himself in a magazine of the Belarusian Association of the Blind (M. Jermalovič was visually impaired himself and was a member of the Association): Jermalovič, 1993-1994. Further publications of the available packages Jermalovič, 2001b: 151-183; Jermalovič, 2007a: 195-273; Jermalovič, 2010: 525-550 (this edition was reprinted after “Skryžali Spadčyny” (Jermalovič, 2007a), but omitted the numbering and precise dating of “Hutarki”). Publication of separate editions: Jermalovič, 2001a; Jermalovič, 2007b.

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tarki" focused on dialogue with the readers (Marcheĺ and Čamiarycki, 2007: 292-299). Similarly in Jermalovič's "Hutarki", confidential conversations on topical issues alternate with poems and historical essays.

Not by genre, but thematically "Hutarki" can be divided into two thematic clusters. One of them is what concerns the Belarusian intellectual, or, as signalized by Jermalovič himself, something "that hurts." In both metaphorical and humorous "Hutarki" No. 3 titled *"Why Would a Pig Need Horns"*, the author sarcastically displays the image of his companion: *"We live in the age when not only things that were in fairy tales come true, but even what was not in them. For example horned pigs! ... I have long been puzzled over why such an unusual breed spawned specifically with us in Belarus. But once, I heard one such pig grunting..."*

Further, Symon Bielarus bitterly describes what he heard and tries to engage it in discussion:

> *"Soon there will be none of your Belarus, as there will be no Belarusians, and your language. Such is the program given to us."*
> *"But is that all that is written in the program?"*
> *"I don't know, maybe there's something else there, but I read only that."*
> *I contradicted humbly:*
> *"There will be people who will not let you..."*
> *The pig was not even embarrassed, but grinned and hinted menacingly:*
> *"Why would we need horns then?"*
> *Then I understood what the horned pigs were bred for."*[4]

This issue of "Hutarki" is dated November 28, 1975. And a little later, in "Hutarki" *"Language is People's Flag"* (No. 5, December 12, 1975), the author comes up to a broader understanding of the issue of freedom in the USSR: *"The freedom of denial of our language is so far the only freedom that is provided to us and which we can use unopposedly. Perhaps that is why there are people who, due to the lack of other freedoms, hurry to take advantage at least of this freedom"* (Jermalovič, 2001b: 156).

But at the end of 1975, Mikola Jermalovič passes from complaints to the current state of the region, freedom, culture, and language in the form of "Hutarki" No. 7 (December 26, 1975). He prints a text which can actually be called a manifesto of Belarusian national intelligentsia "To the One Who Woke Up." This document is so important for the formation of public position that it should be widely quoted:

> *"Dear friend! You have already opened your eyes and see the world correctly. But you are still frightened, you feel lonely, weak, and even unwanted.*

[4] Here and further quoted from the publication of "Hutarki" in "Polymia" magazine made on the basis of personal archive of artist Aliaksiej Maračkin: Jermalovič, 2001b: 154-155.

Well, of course. The new always scares and generates uncertainty. Some have a treacherous thought: 'Why should I follow an unknown narrow path if I can go with many others along a wide road.' And there is nothing to hide here – others, having taken a few steps into the unknown, are coming back and turn to the trampled way."

Having caught this feeling of uncertainty of the Belarusian intellectual, Jermalovič tries to find arguments for strength: "*But do not give in to this mood, defeat it. First of all you must always remember that you live on your land and nobody else but you are the owner of it. If you never forget it, you will always be confident in your action.*"

Further, a program of individual behaviour is formulated: "*Also know that no one will bring happiness and order to your Motherland except yourself, so take the destiny of your Homeland into your hands. Having woken yourself, wake the others to deliberate national life. If you make even one person join the patriotic work – you will make a great deed. And you can do much more. Never abandon your native language, especially while living in your home country. Always use it for speaking and writing, fight for it. Know that the one who preaches denial of our native language, does not abandon his own language, but also dictates it to others.*"

The quoted above would already be enough for this Jermalovič's "Hutarki" to enter the history of the Belarusian thought. But the author made a bigger sensation; he voiced those political goals which at that time seemed unreal: "*Remember firmly that salvation of your Motherland is in its freedom and independence. Therefore, fighting for its freedom and independence, you are fighting for its future. Your greatest wealth is your Motherland. If you lose it, you will become poor yourself, and poverty will be conveyed by inheritance to your children. Therefore, give your entire life to the Motherland. Be with it in all of your thoughts; each word must be in its defense, each of your actions has to be in favour of the country. Let every step of yours be a step towards the freedom of your Homeland!*"

However, Mikola Jermalovič himself understood the totalness of the situation: "*We live in a terrible time, during a pitch-dark night. We are totally robbed. All that is ours is in foreign hands. Everything became not ours. Deprived of all, powerless slaves and labourers of a heartless treasury, we are doomed to a miserable existence. We do not know when the end of this terrible night will come. Anyway, there is no glimpse of light yet.*"

Though here is his recipe for salvation: "*But if today it is not yet possible to free our hands from the chains, we still can release our soul. If today we can not get our wealth back from the foreign hands, let our hearts be free from the fear of a monstrous force of the power, let our minds cast off the chains of lies that entangled them. May the New Year give us free songs, free thoughts and free words. Of course, that is not all, but here is where real FREEDOM begins!*"

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In this text, we see very harsh evaluations of the Soviet reality: *"We live in a terrible time, during a pitch-dark night. We are totally robbed. All that is ours is in foreign hands."* But the programme of action is already formulated: *"Having woken yourself, wake the others to deliberate national life... But if today it is not yet possible to free our hands from the chains, we still can release our souls."* What is extremely important is that in this manifesto, virtually for the first time in the post-Stalin Soviet Belarus, appears the concept of independence: *"Remember firmly that salvation of your Motherland is in its freedom and independence. Therefore, fighting for its freedom and independence, you are fighting for its future."* Thus, the key word "independence" was pronounced and written.

In the next issues of "Hutarki", Mikola Jermalovič developed his thesis of independence. In the second issue of 1976 (January 9) titled *"The Cause of Our Wounds and Misfortunes,"* the author outlined the existence of historical and political stereotype regarding Belarus: *"Widely spread became an idea that Belarus has never been and can not be independent, and that it necessarily has to form alliances with other states and - it goes without saying - to take a subordinate place in these alliances. It will not be a big difficulty to confute this lie, but the fact that it is firmly driven into our heads and took the position of indisputable truth there shows how hard our enemies have worked on clogging our consciousness and how careless we were to allow the unhampered expansion of such ideological weed among us"* (Jermalovič, 2001b: 159).

At the end of this issue of "Hutarki," Mikola Jermalovič states: *"...unions and alliances have never saved Belarus from the danger of war and destruction. But although wars brought the biggest losses to Belarus, they were not the main reason for its decline. Many European countries suffered no less from wars, but despite that they have achieved a great economic development and equally high political and cultural growth. This resulted from them being independent countries which decided their destiny themselves, built their economy and developed the culture at their own discretion and need. But Belarus was deprived of all that."*

And the final paragraph sharply identifies the problem: *"Once Janka Kupala appealed: 'Let's start digging into the causes of our wounds and misfortunes ourselves.' So, this many-centuries dependence on the neighbouring states that plundered and are plundering the material and spiritual wealth of Belarus, that destroyed and are destroying its national life, that suppressed and are suppressing its culture, was and is the main cause of the national decline of Belarus"* (Jermalovič, 2001b: 160 - 161).

There remains a task to find out how widely spread were "Hutarki"? It is totally impossible to say of any quantitative estimates now. But it is possible to name the environment in which "Hutarki" were copied, circulated, and from where they were distributed. It is a non-conformist informal art group

"Na Paddašku" ("In the Attic"). But, as noted by one of the leaders of "Na Paddašku" Jauhien Kulik, if in such categories we can talk about any informal circles, their circle was only one of several plausible environments of expansion of "Hutarki". Mikoła Jermałovič himself also distributed his part of the typescript. Jaŭhien Kulik recollects: "*Mikoła Jermałovič came to us to 'Na Paddašku' on various occasions and brought his 'Hutarki'. The first time it happened in early November 1975… Do not think that we were a strictly conspiratorial group that met for secret gatherings and switched on a copier. Everything was done in a much simpler way: we gave the materials to the colleagues to read, and then everyone was multiplying according to his possibilities. Only when it concerned the most important materials, we started the equipment: a juice squeezer converted to a multiplying machine, which we did not show to anyone... I believe that he did not type them himself, as it is unlikely that he could do that. Probably his wife was typing...*"

It is not known how many copies Jermałovič made himself. Obviously, in addition to "Na Paddašku", "Hutarki" were distributed in other circles, since, as noted by Kulik, "*...our group could print not much, but there was an impression that there were many more 'Hutarki' around.*"

Regarding the area of the circulation of samizdat, Kulik notes the cautious tactics of the participants in this environment: " *'Hutarki' were somehow spread by themselves from my workshop. It happened so that they contained some important material. In such case, it was published in a bigger number of copies. If we were still more active in that, we would have hardly survived for those 20 years of existence of 'Na Paddašku'. We totally trusted each other, but were a rather closed circle. It is our successors, the 'young league' who came after us that make boast of the fact that their activities were directed outwards, but it was a totally different time in the 70s*" (Kulik, 2001).

But not only "Hutarki" became a symbol of the uncensored press in Belarus in the 1970s. At the same time when Mikoła Jermałovič approached the finish line of his samizdat project, an author with a very different biography started to work on the text which became symbolic for the independent thought. We are talking about the "*Letter to a Russian Friend*", known in those days as anonymous.[5] The author of the text was Aliaksiej Kaŭka. Here we need to say at least a few words on the biography of this man, for better understanding of the context of writing the "Letter".

Aliaksiej Kaŭka was a graduate of the Faculty of Philology at the Belarusian State University (1961), and the prospects of the service career in the Soviet system opened in front of him, particularly in the Komsomol sphere. He was an instructor, and in 1959-1963 worked as the first secretary of the

[5] Recent publications of the text: Kaŭka, 1991a: 153-174; Kaŭka, 1991b: 370-391; Kaŭka, 1998: 162-169). Quotations in our article are provided in accordance with the Belarusian translation by Uladzimir Arloŭ for the book "Being Polite to History": Kaŭka, 1991b).

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Červien district committee of LKSMB (LCUBY, Lenin Communist Union of Belarusian Youth); since 1963 appointed as the secretary of the Minsk regional committee of Komsomol, since 1968 was the responsible organizer of the International Department of the Central Committee of Komsomol (All-Union Lenin Communist Union of Youth), where he "supervised" the Polish Komsomol. In 1971 he graduated from the Academy of Social Sciences under the CPSU Central Committee, simultaneously becoming a candidate of historical sciences.

Gradually, two features of his biography - a clear sense of national identity and wide for a Soviet man knowledge of the realities outside the Soviet Union - led Kaŭka to rethinking of his personal role in the life of society. During November 1976 - April 1977 he writes a "Letter to a Russian Friend." Written in the form of an appeal to the Russian intelligentsia, this text was devoted to understanding of the historical path of the Belarusians, defending the distinctive character of this culture, arguing for the right of Belarusians to self-determination. In the "Letter", the cultural policy of the communist authorities in Belarus was clearly defined as assimilatory: "*we are now witnessing in Byelorussia a process of wide-scale assimilation*" (Kaŭka, 1991b: 371; Kaŭka, 1979: 34). Equality of the Belarusian and Russian languages in the BSSR was compared to equality of the Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf. And the thesis about a similar to colonial status of Belarus was later one of the most important for the independent Belarusian thought. In historiosophic sense, the author followed the concept of a pulled-apart destiny of Belarus between Russia and Poland. Despite the fact that one can feel a "mild" influence of Marxism in the "Letter", the communist perspective is described with irony and scepticism.

In 1977, Kaŭka began to distribute the anonymous text of the "Letter" in Moscow, Belarus and Poland. The "Letter" was translated by James Dingley into English and published in 1979 in London as a "document of the Belarusian samizdat" – "*Letter to a Russian Friend: A 'samizdat' publication from Soviet Belorussiya*" ([Kaŭka, 1979]). The "Letter" became widely known, and was read in Belarusian and Ukrainian editions of Radio "*Liberty*", published and cited in Belarusian, Polish ([Kaŭka, 1986]), Ukrainian, Russian emigration publications ([Kaŭka, 1980]).

As later noted by Kaŭka, the idea to write such text and get engaged in its distribution was born spontaneously. "*It was in autumn of 1976, during one of the regular 'table-talks' with a Russian friend, a former colleague in the international activities in VLKSM Central Committee (he was from St. Petersburg, a philologist, Balkanologist, great intellectual, one of those 'guardians and martyrs' of Rus', a bearer and creator of the Russian idea in its 'single, collective', of course Orthodox, essence). In the context of a conversation about Belarusians, my companion naturally noticed, not without cynicism: 'Well,*

you are not like the Chochols[6] *(but allegedly ours, blood-related), we can rely on you. And if you value your 'mova' (language) so much, well, keep your 'ў', pronounce 'Uladzimir' instead of 'Vladimir' (say, we will not be offended).' This case became an impulse: 'There was no way to be silent, and the work on the "Letter to a Russian friend" began.'"*

This text was a very interesting attempt to break through to the consciousness of the Russian intelligentsia in the search for mutual understanding of the national interests of Belarusians: *"I ought not therefore to drag out this already not exactly 'tidy' letter. But it I not my fault that, as I agonized over the letter, I thought not only of my friends. I also thought about those who are not well disposed towards us. As is well known, the Lord omitted to give them the gift of being quick-witted"* (Kaŭka, 1991b: 390; Kaŭka, 1979: 57). Simultaneously with the "Letter" appeared the Belarusian samizdat, the uncensored texts published outside the country. Belarusian problems gained wider publicity in the world.

Final Thesis

This review allows us to understand how hot the degree of public debate among the Belarusian national intelligentsia was. Of course, one can remark that the theses pronounced in public debate or brave ideas published in samizdat reached only a tiny part of the population of the BSSR.

But at that stage, it was very important to develop the concepts and visions that would be widely circulating in the era of perestroika. Anyhow, it can be stated that many basic provisions of the Belarusian debates - the problems of self-identity and the status of the Belarusian language - had been clearly defined in the publications of the 1960s-1970s. Moreover, in the mid 1970s, a requirement of independence for Belarus was put on paper, which at that time looked absolutely fantastic. It appears that some things have to be pronounced first, while their implementation will be carried out in a way not completely foreseen by the authors and protagonists of these concepts.

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[6] "Chochly" is disparaging or ironic Russian name of Ukrainians.

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THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PROJECT IN BELARUSIAN POLITICS IN 1980s-1990s: ZIANON PAŹNIAK'S VERSION

The National Democratic nation-building project has played an important part in political transformation of Belarus in 1987-1995. Under a project here are meant the ideas and intentions concerning building of the future state, society and the actions related to it, as well as respective institutions to be established.

For the analysis purposes, the main themes and thematic categories of the political project articulated by Zianon Paźniak have been identified, and his statements — speeches and texts — in the late 1980s — early 1990s, i.e. during the period of Paźniak's direct political activity in the country, which has been interrupted by emigration in the mid-1990s, are being considered.

It should be emphasized that Paźniak – perhaps not intentionally – became to a certain extent the ideologist of the National Democratic movement. In his texts and speeches, and also in his general political activity, however, he appears in a role of rather practical (but not necessarily pragmatic!) politician (reacting to *ad hoc* situations), not in the one of the ideologist (not offering holistic vision or program). However, as a result of his intensive and flamboyant political activity in those years, he could actually become an embodiment of the National Democratic movement in general for Belarusian society.

Context: the National Movement

The National Democratic movement in Belarus has emerged as a result of politicization of the national-cultural associations established in the 1980s (in particular "Tutejšyja" ("Local People") and "Majstroŭnia" ("Workshop")) and individual activists engaged in protection of the cultural heritage in the Belarusian Soviet Socialistic Republic (BSSR). In this social movement which has emerged in the early 1980s, however, there were specific features which should essentially have limited its mass support base in the future. Mass nationalist movement at early stages of national consciousness development as such has, at least, essential left-wing elements (of populist, Socialist or other kind) in its ideology, but as Ihar Babkoŭ pointed out, "*Revivalists at the end of the 20th century considered themselves to be more like descendants of Polish-Belarusian nobility from the 19th century than descendants of the (Left)*

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populists-Revivalists from the beginning of the 20th century". In any case, the National movement failed to establish sustainable mass associations, organizations or parties up to the mid-1990s, except perhaps for the Belarusian Popular Front (Bielaruski Narodny Front) until its split in 1999.

Awareness of defeat has come later, after complete political destruction of the opposition in 1999, and especially after the opposition lost such strong factor mobilizing its supporters as danger of Belarus's annexation by Russia. In 2001, the philosopher Valiancin Akudovič published his reflexive text "Without Us": "*Revival has denied the real Belarus absolutely any value. Behind the demands of returning the historical heritage, language and cultural experience of the past was concealed the rigid ideological design in which there was no place for achievements and values of contemporary Belarusian society, for all its victories, achievements and the happy moments had either Communist or colonial origin... The Country of Belarus lives without us. (...) we stayed alone not because someone has departed from us, but because the overwhelming majority of inhabitants of the state, in which we hang around from side to side, has never had an intent to go to the 'new land' opened by us*" (Akudovič, 2001).

A symbolic turning point in the history of the National Democratic movement possibly occurred at the mass rally devoted to the traditional Memory Day of "Dziady" on October, 30th, 1988, and was associated with the first public appearance of Zianon Paźniak as a politician. The request for a march and meeting that day has been formally filed with the authorities by the organization "Tutejšyja" not associated with Paźniak. One of its activists, Uladzimir Adamčyk, recalled, "*this event, in my opinion, was fatal for Belarusian political life. Because then, from our, such youthfully uncertain hands, the flag of freedom has passed to the Belarusian Popular Front, into the hands of Zianon Paźniak. (...) it was a mistake which is still bringing its consequences till now*" (Hlobus, 2008).

The Belarusian Popular Front (BNF) has been founded in the wake of the "Dziady", in October, 1988, with Paźniak's initiative, and it would become the main organization of the Belarusian National Democratic movement in the 1980s — 1990s, first in the form of ideologically broad-based people's front, and later – since 1993 – as a political party. Paźniak described that event in a rather romantic mood: "*The Temple man-made, bright and fine as our land, is already visible on the horizon, there, behind the cloud curtain, there — where we go, where, without seeing the way, comes back, goes our tribe. Only a little, but a heavy piece of the road remains — to go through a snakes' field. (…) on October, 19th, 1988 we entered this field. Then the Organizing Committee of the Belarusian Popular Front was established. And we remember how the entire thousand-head bloody dragon hissed, began to grind, cried with its fiery mouths*" (Paźniak, 1993d).

The constituent congress of the BNF took place on June, 24-25th, 1989, in Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. Along with Paźniak's active contacts with lead-

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ers of Baltic democratic movements (proven by his speaking at congresses of the Baltic popular fronts and in the Baltic mass media which were used as a tribune, in the absence of that in the BSSR), such a place of congress once again demonstrates the importance of Baltic, in particular Lithuanian, influences on the development of the National Democratic movement in Belarus.

The BNF had a lot of claims, after all, according to Paźniak, it represented "*the confederation of democratic people, association of the whole nation against the totalitarian system, for democracy, national revival, independence*" (Paźniak, 1991c). The democratic character of the Popular Front, however, has been challenged by some scholars. In particular, David Marples speaks about "authoritarian nationalism" of Zianon Paźniak and early BNF in contrast to the "moderate nationalism" of the BNF-Party of Viačorka, United Civic Party (Abjadnanaja Hromadzianskaja Partyja) of Liabiedźka or different transitive variants which were chosen by the Social Democrats (Marpls, 2007: 95). Actually, later, after the split of the BNF, the BNF-Party under Viačorka has come closer to Liberals while the Conservative-Christian (Kansiervatyŭna-Chryscijanskaja) BNF Party of Paźniak kept rigidly nationalist, conservative and implicitly pro-Catholic ideology.

Paźniak always tried to get rid of "radical" labels which were imposed on him by the opponents from among the ruling elites. "*The centre on the Belarusian political palette has for a long time been occupied by the Popular Front. It was the Communist propaganda which, following its propaganda purposes, named it right-wing*" (Paźniak, 2007a: 78). Then cautious enough purposes have been proclaimed, "*The Popular Front of Belarus has set the task — to unite all people for achievement of three primary goals: society democratization, abolishment of bureaucratic system and national revival on a democratic basis*" (Paźniak, 1989a).

Afterward, the BNF leader shifted from rather faceless centrism to a more conservative position, underlining, however, that the BNF does not use radical means, therefore, say, it is a wide centrist movement. "*In its political actions and aspirations, in its views on economic reforms, approaches to social issues, development of culture, religion, confessional activities, ideas about lawful state, about nation, about society and person, in all main aspects of its political activity, the BNF is coming closest to political practice and principles of the European Christian democracy, as well as to National-Conservative parties*" (Paźniak, 1992f).

Paźniak considers the BNF to be a part of the National Democratic movement, though it is not really clear whether he believes that this movement is united within the framework of the Front, or the Front is its part (probably advanced one). He also does not specify which particular parties and organizations belong to this movement and how this movement corresponds to the broader democratic one. In particular, he speaks about "Belarusian national

liberation democratic forces", meaning also (or even first of all) the BNF, and at the same time, arguing about the efforts of "the Popular Front and all National Democratic forces of our country"; he recognizes the presence of "National Democratic forces" outside the BNF (Paźniak, 1993b).

Yet generally, Paźniak is not inclined to recognize diversity and complexity of political spectrum and tries to reduce all to polarization and opposition "us-them". At the end of 1993, speaking about the opposition to the power of the old party-Soviet nomenclature, he names the "our" forces – "*forces of national independence, democracy, the state development*" while again not specifying their structure and frameworks (Paźniak, 2007b: 163).

At the same time, Paźniak does not accept compromises: "... *It is useless to conduct debates with nomenclature Communists or their stooges on program positions. It is only a waste of time*" (Paźniak, 1990d). Even later, in 1993, Paźniak is proud that the BNF "*has not given in to the nomenclature policy of democratic mimicry*" and "*has not gone with the nomenclature*" (Paźniak, 1993c).

> It is important to seek for possible reasons of that behaviour. Later, the philosopher Valiancin Akudovič recollected: "*It seems obvious that the idea of national Revival (as well as of the Popular Front) is borrowed from 'Balts' who before others (Soviet nations) chose a separate way and had managed to formulate already a lot of things by the time the national movement in Belarus gained at least some strength. And it was indeed so. At the same time, we shall realize, that as soon as the political focus of transformations moved from anticommunism to ethnocultural tradition, then in the conditions of Belarus, the idea of Revival could not be bypassed irrespective of whether it existed already somewhere, or it should have been invented by Belarusians themselves*" (Akudovič, 2005).

It is indeed so, but the idea was implemented in practice according to a certain model which was borrowed exactly from the Baltic nations. At the same time, the Baltic model is based on the previous political history of these nations which considerably differed in the recent century from the Belarusian one — in particular, all three Baltic nations had their own statehoods destroyed by the USSR in 1940, but the memory of which remained, and owing to the socioeconomic factors, the national movement in the Baltic was rather right-wing and focused on statehood, instead of just revival of the decayed culture. It was facilitated in particular by considerably smaller, in comparison with Belarus, Soviet-time industrialization and modernization in these countries (especially Lithuania), as well as their looser integration within the USSR.

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The program adopted at the first BNF congress in June, 1989, has proclaimed the main goals of the movement – struggle for independence of Belarus, government (ulady) democratization, revival of the Belarusian language and culture — a standard set of demands for popular fronts in Soviet national republics, though it has been adopted rather early, very soon after the respective Baltic movements have proclaimed similar goals.

The main ideological principles have been set at the 2nd congress of the BNF in March, 1991, in the political statement succinctly named "*Freedom, Independence, Revival*". In 1993, Paźniak explained: "*the main principle, the main motto of our movement is the Revival. (...) the most important value for us now is the national state... If we can consider independence as the main political goal, then the Revival is the main historical goal of the nation. If we revive our culture, language, history, our traditions, our public bonds – then there will be the independence, our state will live. (…) to a certain degree, we converge with liberal understanding of freedom in economy, but for us, the priority is people's freedom, because such a historical necessity has arisen*" (Paźniak, 1993c).

It emphasizes initial differences from the liberal-democratic platform of West European style. Speaking about the dilemma between sovereignty and human rights, and doubting the correctness of priority of human rights in the form it was implemented then in Western European countries, Paźniak noticed, "*we should not speak about priority — either sovereignty or human rights. For the sovereignty – as the rights of entire people – is also a human right (...) it is necessary to recognize not a priority, but parity, equality of these rights*" (Paźniak, 1993c).

The Main Components of the Project

Independence

Paźniak invariably regarded independence as an overall objective of his political mission. Approximately since 1989, he has openly struggled for an exit from the USSR. "*The main questions which the republics of the USSR objectively face now are the questions of national revival and national independence. Just one and a half years ago, the situation was different. National revival was perceived as a component of democratization of the society, the sovereignty seemed to be completely achievable through structural reorganization of the USSR — the conclusion of the new Union treaty based on confederative bonds between free republics. But time has passed and it became clear that the essential change in functions of the party superstate is not to be expected*" (Paźniak, 1989b).

Being in the Soviet context, Paźniak did not escape its influence; the clear evidences of that are his quotations from and references to Lenin (Paźniak, 1988a), deliberations on "progressiveness" of a process (Paźniak, 1989b) and

other borrowings from the ideology and rhetoric of the Soviet regime: the turning point in giving up the external mimicry was 1990 when the *"overall objectives of the movement are defined both in the Program and in the Charter of the BNF: creation of democratic society in Belarus, achievement of 'the real sovereignty' of the republic and revival of the Belarusian nation. (...) we intend to revive 'Lenin's principles of a national policy'. As though we do not know that these 'principles' are vague, inconsistent, confused and false. And what does Lenin have to do here? (…) one and a half years ago, we followed the template and started with utopian understanding of the future USSR 'as a voluntary union of the equal in rights and sovereign states with the right of their free exit out of its structure'. (...) Either there is sovereignty, or there is not. It can neither be shared, nor divided into halves. Illusiveness of notion of (BSSR's) sovereignty as a part of the USSR is proven not only by logics and common sense, but first of all by the history of 'the Soviet country' and especially the political practice of the Perestroika period"* (Paźniak, 1990d).

> Paźniak articulates also presumably rational arguments in favour of independence. *"It is the empire, it is the Soviet Union which peels all republics, which peels our people, our Chernobyl country. What have we received from them because of Chernobyl? (...) we have nothing. We have Chernobyl and our hands. Therefore – unless we have independence, we will never rise from our knees"* (Paźniak, 1991a).

The acute Chernobyl problematics could easily mobilize the society for supporting the independence goal: *"The Chernobyl tragedy has merged together all our predicaments, all our problems – ecological, economic, political, cultural, moral and has put a question straightforwardly – either we will die as a people, as a nation, as a culture within the USSR, or we will be rescued through independence, through an exit from the USSR and restoration of the sovereign Belarusian state"* (Paźniak, 1990d).

Later, after proclaiming sovereignty, he demands to strengthen it and argues that the original independence has not been reached yet. *"In our conditions basically nobody noticed the proclamation of independence of Belarus and understood it, including the Supreme Soviet legislators. (...) as for today, the Declaration is merely an empty piece of paper"* (Paźniak, 1990e).

The leader of the BNF frequently reiterates that it is necessary to strengthen independence also in the 1990s, after disintegration of the USSR. *"For independence strengthening, it was necessary to make the following transformations: to implement a governance reform (to abolish Soviets and to shift to a municipal governance system); to carry out an economic reform on the market basis; to revive national culture and national consciousness; to create institutes of state independence"* (Paźniak, 1992f).

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Vision of the Independent State

In July 1990, Paźniak declares that besides achievement of independence, a main purpose of the Popular Front is building of a democratic society and republic. "*The BNF has devoted the main part of its activities in (recent) one and a half years, as well as paid the most attention to this task. Without a democratic society, in our circumstances both independence and nation and culture revival are impossible, since the existing BSSR regime is the most conservative, antinational and even antisocial, antidemocratic, and among its nomenclature highest ranks*" (Paźniak, 1990d).

In those years, the notions of "independence" and "democracy" in Paźniak's texts appear always together. "*There is a grand historic task facing this generation of the citizens of Belarus – to establish the independent democratic Belarusian Republic*" (Paźniak, 1990a). He almost does not articulate any ethnic nationalism notions, and sometimes demonstrates explicitly civic orientation. "*Only in Perestroika, only in democratic Belarus there will be freedom and equal rights for all nationalities. Therefore, it is necessary to struggle together for Perestroika, for our future. (…) Let us not forget that all of us make the Nation. Russians, Jews, Poles and Tatars – all of us. Never forget about it!*" (Paźniak, 1988b).

However, some contradictions exist, as Paźniak speaks at the same time about the "Belarusian republic" (Paźniak, 1990f; 1990c or 1990b), i.e. underlining ethnic Belarusian character of the future state. This comes along with absolute denial of the Belarusian socialist Soviet statehood with its dictatorship of proletariat as an ideological principle. "*History of the BSSR has shown that the state based not on the nation and national will of united citizens, but on class identities (prykmiety), false social illusions and the utopian ideological doctrine, - such state turns against people, destroys the culture, the land and the people, such state cannot be a democratic humane (humannaja) republic*" (Paźniak, 1990a).

Solving social problems is also linked to independence. "*National state independence is an essentially social institution (stanovišča sacyjaĺnaje) which unites all the population of a nation. For self-governing (samastojnaść), independence of the people (narod) and the state is a normal condition of society which guarantees that it works for itself, (its own) cultural development and historical prospects*" (Paźniak, 1990d). At the same time, Paźniak invariably, while discussing virtually any problem, emphasizes the fundamental role of the factor of national consciousness and its language component. "*Without national consciousness, it is absolutely impossible to create a national state. Without universality of national language, the history is lost, there is no development of the culture of society, the highest form of which is again creation of the national state*" (Paźniak, 1992b).

Revival

Paźniak writes a lot about denationalization as the key problem of the Belarusian society, meaning by it assimilation and destruction of the Belarusian culture. Its overcoming is linked with "Revival" (*Adradžeńnie*), a key component of Paźniak's political project. As the BNF leader reminded, "*it is not accidental that the BNF is called 'Adradžeńnie'.*[2] *Without the revival of national community – consciousness, Belarusian language, culture, historical memory, Belarusian schools, religion — any freedom is unattainable, any reforms are unreal, no improvement of life conditions will occur*" (Paźniak, 1991c).

Sometimes, the concept of Revival is reduced to a narrower definition of explicitly cultural character. "*To ensure the development of market reforms and stable existence of a certain civilized condition of a society, there should be a corresponding level of culture (development) based on unity of traditions, national consciousness, history and language. (…) many European peoples, which due to historical circumstances and catastrophes have found themselves in unfavorable conditions of existence, had to restore the unity of culture. (...) there is only one way (to do that) – national-cultural revival which occurred in the way of the accelerated development (acceleration) and within (this process) restoration of universality of the national language was the main task*" (Paźniak, 1992a).

Historical tasks, however, mean for him something more than merely cultural and language aspects. Thus, another time Paźniak treats the concept of "Revival" much more widely, "*... Belarusian Revival is a universal, deeply democratic, antitotalitarian movement which covers all public processes (political reforms, economy, culture, social issues, environment, army) and are directed at creation of the national independent democratic and lawful state*" (Paźniak, 1992e). Therefore, it is logical that Paźniak speaks in general about "Belarusian National Democratic Revival" (Paźniak, 2007c: 116).

However, these concepts remain not clearly differentiated also in the rhetoric of Paźniak himself, since he regularly speaks again only about the "national and cultural Revival" (Paźniak, 1993d), and tries to reduce other issues to the cultural ones. "*It is necessary to begin the Republic's revival with (work in) two directions — economy and culture, while remembering that a basis of any economy is the culture of society in the widest sense of the word. Any development of new technologies, new ideas, any progressive reforms of economic development are impossible in a backward society. No civilization in the history has ever been lost because of hunger or an economic crisis, but many have ceased to exist because of moral desintegration. It is necessary to begin (our work) in culture with national school, national language, history, religion and information*" (Paźniak, 1992c).

[2] The full official name of the BNF initially was Belarusian Popular Front for Perestroika "Revival", although the words "for Perestroyka" were soon dropped.

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Nevertheless, there are all reasons not to reduce the content of the concept of Revival in Paźniak's ideology only to cultural sphere, or even mostly to cultural sphere. It is more wide-scale and multilateral ideological design — assuming radical reorganization of the entire society and the state. Meanwhile, the Revival concept which initially was really articulated as cultural-linguistic one, later inevitably should have been turned into a fundamental political ideology. It happened in parallel to entrance of its proponents into the "great politics", — by their launching the mass actions, election to the parliament etc. — and in connection with their willingness to politisize the issues of language, culture and identity, and — the most important point — mutual willingness of the ruling elite to also make these issues political and, as a result, to accept the dividing not only along political or ideological lines, but also along language-related and cultural ones — i.e. actually to agree on the nation split.

Indeed, the Revival concept in Paźniak's political project and the National Democratic movement rapidly developed towards expansion and deepening of its positions, and owing to the objective circumstances specified above could not keep only cultural-language orientation. Here he differed from the notions of "Revival" in the views of the Belarusian public figures in the first half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasize the continuity between Paźniak and the former "Revivalist" tradition — after all, Paźniak initially also adhered to a narrower, "cultural" interpretation (similar to the positions of the ideologists of the Belarusian national organizations in the first half of the century), and only later in the process of his increasing engagement into politics he gradually reviewed the concept. It may prove the existence of a certain (however indirect) continuity in development of the Belarusian National Democratic movement.

Of course, the problem of identifying temporal and spatial parallels and predecessors to the concept of "Revival" is still far from being solved, but it is remarkable that already in his emigration period, Paźniak wrote in his book "Reflections. New Belarusian Revival Concept" (Paźniak, 2007) about the Belarusian "National Revolution" of 1991 (Paźniak, 2007: 6 or 53), and it can prove the influence of the European Right radicals.

Another important point that should be mentioned here is the etatist tendencies in his vision of how the Revival should be achieved. According to Zianon Paźniak, "*civil society and state shall take care of high culture, art, literature, publishing and everything related to cultural-national Revival and development. The state shall support and fund the national-cultural Revival, pursue state policy aimed at development of national culture (…) Culture cannot exist without subsidies, just on its own*" (Paźniak, 1992a).

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Language

The Belarusian nationalism of the end of the 20th century paid extremely much attention to the national language. Paźniak sharply opposes possible introduction of the second state language – Russian — discussed in the early 1990s, explaining it by the monoethnicity of the country and not indigenous origin of the Russian population in Belarus. *"Two languages for one people is a complete absurdity"* (Paźniak, 1992b).

In the second half of 1992, during the discussion on the new Constitution draft, the parliamentary faction "Belarus" known for its support of prime-minister V. Kiebič, together with representatives of veterans in the Supreme Soviet proposed to take a number of constitutional questions to the referendum, in particular the ones on state system and state-language status for the Russian language. Objecting to them, the BNF leader has declared it impossible to take such questions to a referendum, *"one generation does not have the language at its disposal. Language is the most important phenomenon, factor and culture instrument. It belongs to the history, the present and the future. Its continuation is in eternity, and nobody has the right to stop this continuation but only to promote it. It is the higher moral law of cultural existence fixed in numerous traditions and laws"* (Paźniak, 1992a).

At the same time, Paźniak is explicitly cautious in his statements concerning the expansion of use of the Belarusian language. *"Nobody ever forced anybody, nobody anywhere forces or will force anybody to speak Belarusian. Since if a language has the state-language status, everyone will aspire to know it. The state language is an obligatory one first of all for the state establishments"* (Paźniak, 1992a).

Another important moment is Paźniak's strong support for returning the written Belarusian language to the orthography known as *taraškievica* – a set of rules codified by Branislaŭ Taraškievič without changes of the 1933 Soviet Belarus language reform. He did not elaborate on this matter publicly but anytime he could insist on publishing his texts in that orthography which was identified as a marker of non-Soviet Belarusian language clean of any Russian intrusion. The orthography debate and usage of its Soviet and non-Soviet variants became a political issue and differentiated political movements all along into the 2010s.

The Prospects of Belarus

Belarus in the early 1990s, according to Paźniak, *"has the best conditions for integration into the European system. (...) we have a rather balanced economy, (in Belarus) functions a full-fledged economic complex on rather high organizational and technological level, there is a high level of skills among the*

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working class, significant concentration of intellectual resources: fundamental and applied science" (Paźniak, 1992d). Speaking abroad, he proudly declares: "*Belarus is one of the most economically developed states among the republics of the former USSR, with the high-technology diversified production, with rather high level of agriculture (...), with significant scientific and intellectual capacity, with rich resources of industrial raw materials, with public stability*" (Paźniak, 1992f).

Thereby, Paźniak does not notice how he contradicts his own opinion of the BSSR, according to which he saw virtually no positive moments in the existing Belarusian Soviet statehood. At the same time, making the quoted statement at the beginning of independence and recognizing the presence of preconditions for successful development, Paźniak avoids the question of how and in which structural framework these preconditions have been created. However, such failed logics and discrepancy are not something extraordinary for any ideology. Further, Paźniak again denies rationality of the government in the Soviet times. "*Now it lacks good state thinking since during the Bolshevik rule and the Soviet occupation the culture and national consciousness of the people were heavily destroyed. The leadership included functionaries, renegades, traitors who hated their people, their land*" (Paźniak, 1992d).

At the end of the first year of independence, Paźniak estimated the situation of the new independent state and, that is remarkable, recognized the existence of the state structure, but did not consider it important, and neither considered important the presence of the functioning state mechanism and bureaucracy — an important factor for retaining independence in any country.

"*What heritage has received the independent Belarus?*
- *The state located on 2/3 of the territory of the Belarusian People's Republic*[3] *(...);*
- *The economy and the production (branch), the essence of wich was to be the assembly line of the USSR. (...) higher level of production, which, however, is not adapted to our internal and state needs (...);*
- *Agriculture, focused on industrial stock-breeding that has transformed our Belarus into a huge pigsty of the Soviet Union*" (Paźniak, 1992a). Besides, Belarus has received "*the environment, which contains nitrates in the soil, chemical sewage rivers, nuclear test areas in Palessie where the nuclear weapon has been tested on human beings, and (...) Chernobyl – the 'child' of the CPSU;*
- *The deformed national consciousness, spiritually sick society – the result of culture destruction, history falsification, humiliation of the native language;*

[3] Belarusian People's Republic (Bielaruskaja Narodnaja Respublika), known in Belarusian short name as the BNR, was proclaimed in Minsk, in March 1918, yet failed to fully establish itself, though it probably influenced the Moscow's decision to proclaim its Communist counterpart – the BSSR in January 1919, in Smolensk.

- *(...) the geopolitical position, the essence of wich is dependence on Russia and constant threat from the East"* (*Paźniak*, 1992a).

Such disregard of existing effective state structure at the same time perfectly corresponds to the Right Conservative intellectual tradition with its rather contemptious view of bureaucracy and preference for the state model of a "republic" with minimum government. Of course, it contradicts the etatist orientation in implementation of the "National Revival" mentioned above, though such contradiction in ideology and activities of practical politicians is a rather common thing for politics in general.

Democracy and Anticommunism

In 1991, Paźniak declared, *"the Belarusian Popular Front is based on the principles of democracy, independence of Belarus and national revival. As in other such movements, all are united by antitotalitarianism which by the middle of 1990, as a result of political ripening of the society, took the form of anticommunism. The BNF consistently adheres to the basic democratic criteria: protection of human rights, the right of nations to self-determination, and national communities to state independence, human rights to freedom, work, free movement, freedom of worship and expression of one's views, etc."* (Paźniak, 1991c).

At the same time, democratic orientation of the National Democratic movement was a constant source of grievances at the Front's inability to reach desirable width of popular support and this ideological component by itself created contradictions in the real politics. Despite its initial successes in mass mobilization by using social tensions, the BNF in the future renounced using social issues which would be comprehensible to numerous social groups. Very soon it became the most numerous party, but also the party which gained rather serious negative image, forming a specific group separated from the larger society.

This evolution has been facilitated by radical anticommunism which was a problematic political idea in Belarus whose population did not share such antipathy to the Soviet regime as in all neighbouring Soviet republics and testified it at the March 1991 referendum. This reality was recognized also by the representatives of the Belarusian National Democratic movement who picked up after publicist Alieś Adamovič his epithet "Belarus is Vendée of the Perestroyka".

Attempts to explain this absence of broad popular support – and Paźniak and other representatives of National Democratic movement constantly spoke about their relying on people's support – were probable reasons for emergence of the new concept of population's "lumpenization" ("*Democracy in a lumpenized society is impossible*" (Paźniak, 1991d)), as well as the preser-

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vation and further development of the concept of "denationalization" (i.e. actually attempts to declare Belarusian population to be "not original, spoiled" people). "*They [Communists] have undermined the consolidation base of the Belarusian nation. Therefore, until these consolidating base of national consciousness are revived, no political movement in Belarus can be a mass-based (masavy) one*" (Paźniak, 1991e).

The situation was exacerbated by the problems faced by the BNF and its parliamentary faction in their interaction with rather pro-communist 12th Supreme Soviet elected under the Communist rule (Paźniak, 1991f or 1991d), and their futile attempts to get the parliament to vote on early parliamentary elections (Paźniak, 1991d). For a time, this impossibility to hold new elections allowed to explain the political difficulties of the party and all the National Democratic movement, optimistically referring to democracy and elections as the solution, yet in the mid-1990s the BNF lost rather free presidential and parliamentary elections.

The BNF has its own reservations on democracy. Paźniak repeatedly expresses his negative opinion of the Russian political regime in the 1990s, he puts in inverted commas the expression "Yeltsin's democracy", underlining its inadequacy and speaks about it as a source of danger to Belarus (Paźniak, 1992a). At the same time, despite numerous Paźniak's criticism of the Russian and Western democracy models, even in the late 1990s the BNF keeps declaring its adherence to democracy.

Anticommunism

Anticommunism, along with the concept of national Revival, is one of the key components of Paźniak's project. He retains an uncompromising stance concerning the Communist party and everything related to it. He was sure that even the reformed Communist system had no future whatsoever. "*There is only death, disintegration of this semi-civilization ahead (inside Communist system). (…) there is only one exit from the dead-end – back, if, however, the society is still capable to move. Back to the market and private property, back to democracy, back to religion and traditional moral, back to the humane culture, back to the sovereignty and state independence. (…) it is OBVIOUS THAT EACH honest person by his or her humane essence should struggle with Communism and overcome the Communist ideology as the extremely antihuman, inhumane and antisocial phenomenon*" (Paźniak, 1990d).

Moreover, even Social Democracy in Paźniak's view is just "a spare trench" for Communists. (Paźniak, 1990d) Paźniak in his statements condemns cooperation with communists after achieving formal independence as well. "*In Belarus, there can be no coalition government and or coalition with participation of Communists*" (Paźniak, 1993b).

This lashing out at the Communist regime in the BSSR whose population as a whole still kept loyalty to the Soviet regime focused on social aspects, had its consequences. Akudovič, reflecting on the results of the "Revival project", wrote: "*The Belarusian state cannot be other but social, as the overwhelming majority of inhabitants of our country both prioritize, and will prioritize not national-cultural or ideological, but social values*" (Akudovič, 2005). Therefore, the sharp negation by the BNF of the social values which have spread in the society in the USSR age, should have affected its image and support by the society.

Religion

Religious issues are present in Paźniak's ideological designs and he declares in particular, "*I am Catholic. I consider myself to be a believing Christian. I feel equally well among believers of all Christian faiths in Belarus — Orthodox, Catholics, Uniates, Evangelic Protestants. The Christian faith, our national history, culture and Fatherland-Belarus should unite all of us*" (Paźniak, 1991c). Thus, generally the Christianity of the Western rite is meant more as a cultural tradition, than creed as such.

As Alieh Latyšonak argued, "*national and religious revivals developed independently of each other since national leaders, despite their efforts, could not achieve support neither of Catholic, nor Orthodox clergy. The former preferred bonds with Poland (…). The latter has made a choice in favour of Russia (…). In this situation, the National Democratic opposition has once again turned to revival of the Uniate Church as a national denomination*" (Latyšonak, 2007).

Officially, revival of the Uniate Church has never been mentioned as a purpose of the BNF in its documents, but the idea has been articulated by the representatives of the National Democratic movement, including Paźniak. "*It is the tragedy of the Belarusian people that the enemy forces have torn off its Christian religion from it. (…) the Russian tsarism together with the Russian Orthodox church have destroyed the Unia (Greek Catholicism) in Belarus. It was a real genocide on national-denominational grounds – murders of people, destruction of churches, burning books and icons... 80% of the population of Belarus were Uniates. (…) I do not see any positive role, any moral future for the present Russian-Muscovite Orthodoxy in Belarus unless the repentance for the tortures, for the blood of innocent murdered Uniates takes place (...) The Holy Unia in Belarus is reviving*" (Paźniak, 1991e). Paźniak openly idealizes Uniate Church. "*The Belarusian Uniate Church is the martyr Church. The Unia has not soiled itself by cooperation with the NKVD and KGB. It has been drowned in blood by the Russian autocracy and Russian Orthodoxy merged with the imperial regime*" (Paźniak, 1993a).

Along with the Uniate revival, Paźniak cautiously raised a question of autocephaly for the Orthodox church in Belarus. "*I have not any doubt that Bela-*

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rusian Orthodox Autocephalous Church existing in the free world will expand its activities in the future also to ethnic Belarus. Orthodoxy in Belarus for the Belarusian people should be Belarusian, sacred and Christian, not Russian, Bolshevik, Black-Hundred style, or what ever" (Paźniak, 1991e).

The instrumental approach to religion displayed by the BNF leader slightly contradicts his declared religiousness. However, his attacks against Orthodoxy are more frequent than against Catholicism. "*Catholic priests and especially Orthodox priests now support the Communist nomenclature, the incumbents, sit in the Supreme Soviet and, by the way, are allied with the CPB party group, even sign the common appeals with Communists against Democrats. (…) priests should not participate in politics, sit in the Supreme Soviets and parliaments. (...) after destruction of the Unia, the religion in Belarus became the tool of policies and manipulations by the forces hostile to the Belarusian people. By means of Russian Orthodoxy, tsarism and Russian chauvinists (and now communists) carried out the policy of Russification here. Polish chauvinists tried to use Catholicism as a means to Polonize Belarusians, and they have done damage to Belarusians and an equal one to themselves and Catholicism. (...) We see Catholicism future in the free Belarus together with the Belarusian people, with its language, culture and revival*" (Paźniak, 1991e).

Paźniak's views on religious policy also correspond to his general principles. It is remarkable that he names Orthodox and Catholic Churches as Orthodox and Catholic "administration" and believes that the state can solve the destiny of the Belarusian people by supporting the Uniate Church — practically following the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*. "*That faith will have the future in Belarus, which will master and revive Belarusian in its official use more quickly... If the Orthodox and Catholic administration by that time do not turn toward Belarus, the Belarusian language, historical, spiritual destiny of the Belarusian people, then one should not doubt that the Belarusian state will support the Unia*" (Paźniak, 1993a).

Of course, Paźniak invariably assures that the BNF supports all traditional Christian denominations and aspires to ensure their equality, "*the Belarusian Popular Front treats equally and supports all traditional faiths in Belarus. No one is given priority. A basis of revival and consolidation in Belarus is formed by the national consciousness, instead of religion, as at is in Poland*" (Paźniak, 1991e). Yet given the rather tendentious display of the history of the Uniate church, these assurances do not look so convincing.

Project Implementation

Although at the first glance it seems that Paźniak does not propose conducting revolutionary changes in the society *for implementation of his project*, and emphasizes a more "revival" approach, i.e. restoration of former, more cor-

rect order,[4] but in the late 1980s — early 1990s his proposals to place the issues concerning the BSSR under the control of the Minsk government and solve them independently of Moscow, sounded unprecedented in the Republic and looked radical. "*If Belarus did not give almost half of its national income to the USSR every year, if it itself owned its territory, natural resources and productive funds, if it itself collected its foreign currency, conducted the foreign policy and itself ruled over its own destiny, then we would already be effectively saving ourselves from Chernobyl since long time ago, and, I am sure, would already be rescued*" (Paźniak, 1990d).

Besides considering independence as only the way to solve essential problems, Paźniak also comes nearer to populism in his other appeals to the people. The BNF leader actually calls them to direct action, "*people should help to conduct de-partization, i.e. labour collectives should disband the Communist Party structures (…), people should help the councils in sealing up the property of the CPSU and Komsomol through personal participation, positioning pickets, organization of patrols, collection of petition signatures. (…) it is necessary that people join the building of their independence, their Republic. (...) indeed, the only way to enforce nationalization is to create faites accompli. The mechanism is as follows: the Soviets decide on property, however temporally, and people should take what belongs to them. (...) we should rapidly form our own governance structures and the structures for protection of these governance system. People's initiative in this direction will very much accelerate implementation of this goal*" (Paźniak, 1991b).

To a certain degree, the mechanism was used in the first days after August 1991 events. As Viačaslaŭ Siŭčyk testified: "*In addition to the party (BNF) guard, we also created the national guards from volunteers (about two thousand persons). They have done a lot to make the state take the Communist Party property - buildings of the Oblast Committee, City Committee and Central Committee of the CPB*" (Tamakovič, 2008: 66).

After disintegration of the USSR, in Paźniak's judgment, nothing really changed, that is why he believes it is necessary to eliminate the power of the communist nomenclature, and first of all to replace the government. "... *The old Government pursues anticultural, antinational (antynarodnuju) policy. (...) a new government of national trust is necessary. If we can form the new government, in 5-8 years we will not only rise on feet, but we will reach a living standard of such countries as Denmark, Austria, Finland etc. (...) I have the respective calculations*" (Paźniak, 1992d).

But the BNF and Paźniak could not achieve the change of the government and start of realization of their political project in the 1990s through constitutional mechanisms. Probably therefore, during later period of the political activity in exile, Paźniak argued for more activist stance, "*let's not*

[4] A propos, both etymologically and in initial usage the word "revolution" meant return to earlier, "correct" order of things.

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forget: neither America, nor Moscow or Brussels decide. Belarus and the Belarusian People decide" (Paźniak, 2001). Jaŭhien Miranovič commented on it, "*Paźniak's belief in collective wisdom of the people is deprived of rationalism to the same extent as belief of the same people in the wisdom of the 'Father' [Lukašenka]*" (Rudkoŭski, 2005).

Conclusions

The ideology of the Belarusian Popular Front has been reflected first of all in speeches and texts of the leader of the Front — Zianon Paźniak, because of personalized hierarchy of this organization, especially from the point of view of general public. The political project (however rather situational and not comprehensive) of Paźniak has become fundamental for the BNF ideology.

Meanwhile, in his political activity during the reviewed period, Paźniak was a practical politician rather than an ideologist. It is proven by such features of his ideology as its situational character (reaction to *ad hoc* challenges), absence of the consistent and elaborated vision of some essential problems (for example, the concept of the "Belarusian nation"). The latter detail is especially important, because in the absence of his own developed vision of these questions, Paźniak also avoids to refer to any already existing canon of the Belarusian national movement. Meanwhile, in all texts and speeches of the BNF leader, the project of building the future Belarusian state and society is presented only along the most general lines. Paźniak virtually discussed only the principles and was doing that frequently in a negative modality (against: the USSR, communism, nomenclature, russification), and neglecting any positive aspects (for: independence, culture revival, establishment of democracy and human rights).

The political project of the BNF defined in Paźniak's texts and speeches, played an important part in Belarusian politics in the 1980s — 1990s, both per se and by generating opposition to the National Democratic movement. To a significant degree, its character has been shaped by some traits of Paźniak's person, for example by his invariably suspicious — if not hostile — approach to Russia, and the sceptical view on the modern West, despite the declared firm adherence to Western, European civilization and implicit closeness to the "Latin tradition".

These specifics can somehow explain also the majority of other main features of the ideology considered in this article — in particular its neglect of social aspects, strict moral foundations, priority of the rights of nation over the rights of individual etc. It should be mentioned that these principles correspond more to the ideology of Christian Democratic parties in European countries, rather than to ideological platforms of the nationalist organizations of the nations struggling to achieve independence or immediately after gaining independence. Therefore, one should speak about Paźniak's nation-

alism with significant reservations, and perhaps he should be identified as a representative of National Democratic wing, not nationalistic one. The ideological platform of the BNF also indirectly points out the necessity of such identification, as they are too right-wing and conservative for a national-liberation movement.

Paźniak, who grew up as a person in atypical for the average citizen of the Soviet Belarus conditions, has not only taken a rather specific civil and political position, but also probably distanced himself from the Belarusian context of those years. This semi-isolation was combined with close contacts of the BNF leader with the Polish cultural and political discourse,[5] and also rather close relations with Baltic anti-Soviet movements and the context of the Baltic Soviet republics. As a result, his already specific for such Sovietized and modernized country as Belarus ideological platform has been covered by further ideological concepts, which very likely had non-Belarusian origin (in particular motives of "the Soviet occupation", extreme anticommunism, motive of "independence restoration" etc.).

The political project developed by Paźniak and centered on the concept of the "national revival", thanks to its alternativeness to the Soviet regime, could attract attention of a considerable segment of the Belarusian society at the decades' turn, but only for a short time.

In general, Paźniak's views and political project are rather characteristic for anticommunist movement in the western Soviet Union, though it is important to emphasize the specificity of the modern political history of Belarus which crucially differed from other European republics of the USSR. This specificity limited the chances of Paźniak's right Conservative platform accompanied by radical anti-Communist rhetoric to find responsive and supportive audience in the BSSR. In particular, it is necessary to note that in other European Soviet republics there were stronger traditions of their own statehood during the newest history, as well as there was no factor of powerful cultural hegemony of the Soviet regime which was strongly felt even in the independent Belarus in the 1990s.

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[5] Proven even by such curiosities as some absolutely untypical for Belarusian literary language Polish loanwords and linguistic influences in his texts.

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"KRYVJIA" AND "ZADRUGA" AS CULTURAL AND POLITICAL HORIZONS OF NATIONAL REBIRTH PROJECTS OF BELARUS AND POLAND: EXPERIENCE OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Наша мінуўшчына – гэта блуканне па раздарожжах і муках,
а мы цяпер ізноў пры... сваім народзе крывічанскім
і разам з ім адбудовываемо вольную Крывію! — В. Ластоўскі

W koncepcji artystycznej i religijnej istota humanistyczna człowieka
zostaje totalnie wessana do organizmu wyższego rzędu,
jakim jest mit zadrużny. — Jan Stachniuk

The complex and ambiguous political and economic processes indicative to *interbellum* in Europe and post-revolutionary period in Russia in the first third of the 20th century appeared the most important factors of radical geopolitical and sociocultural transformations in Central and East-European region. In consequence of breakdown of the empires and activation of national movements many peoples for the first time ever (or newly) gained real chances to develop their culture and build their states independently. Among these states are Belarus and Poland, with their own historical experience, long and dramatic, full of national ups and downs and performances as well as mortifying defeats and periods of stagnations. On a wave of the civil and national recovery of the 1920s-30s, Polish and Belarusian intellectuals proposed a wide spectrum of programs of national and civic rebirth, from international-communist to conservative-nationalistic.

We will focus on the analysis and comparison of the two of them as the most original, in our opinion, insufficiently explored and evaluated: concepts of *Kryvič rebirth* by Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski and *Slavic pan-humanism* by Jan Stachniuk. The choice of these particular philosophical, historical, religious and political-ideological positions is determined by at least three circumstances. Firstly, their authors rather eloquently and completely reflected radical nationally-oriented sentiments and expectations of a certain part of the-then Belarusian and Polish intelligentsia. Secondly, these positions, although far from being indisputable in scientific-and-historical and philosophical respect, however, in general are well-developed and -founded

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conceptually (substantively and ideologically) which makes them interesting objects for analysis. Thirdly and finally, due to the features outlined above, the approaches under consideration to the solution of inter-ethnic relations issues still have an influence on the spiritual atmosphere of the society and inspire present-day Belarusians and Poles to search optimal strategies of national development now in a new general-culture context of globalization and socio-cultural transitivity (see, for example, Dziermant, 2006, Makievič, 2008; Tomasiewicz, 2000; Grott, 2003; Kończal, 2006).

Moral, intellectual, professional and civic image of both Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski (1883–1938) and Jan Stachniuk (1905–1963) takes shape in the context of an inevitable drama and tragedy of the interwar time. Being inflammable romantics and resolute fighters against the "historical ballast" aggravating people's national development, they both passed a broken path starting from painful search for the ways of "national question" solution and attempts to organize efficient institutions to make this solution work and ending with a rigid, largely unjust condemnation of their political views and post-mortem obliteration for many years.

However, the strategies they chose to implement their life and political projects were different. Jan Stachniuk was and still remains a marginal figure in Polish philosophical and political thought primarily because of his steadfast anti-Catholic position. Although there are a lot of bright names among his conceptual predecessor (Z. Dolęnga-Hodakowski, the founder of Polish archeology and ethnography, J. Słowacki, the greatest name in Polish poetry and others), his own specific religious (neo-pagan in essence) and sociopolitical (ethno-nationalistic in general) constructions inspire today a rather narrow group of intellectuals. Before World War II, Jan Stachniuk became a founder and ideologist of Polish nationalistic community "Zadruga" as well as editor of both the eponymous journal coming out in Poland from 1937 to 1939 and the underground journal "Zryv" issued during the Nazi occupation. In 1952, Jan Stachniuk was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment on a charge of creation of "Nazi" organization shortly before the war, however, in 1955 he was released.

The fate of Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski was by far more tragic (he was arrested on two occasions by faked-up evidence and in 1938 he was shoot dead), but at the same time, his political and scientific activities had a disproportionately greater influence and resonance among Belarusians in his days.

Not only was Lastoŭski a socio-political public figure and head of government of the Belarusian People's Republic but also a talented historian and a linguist, writer and publicist. He carried on a wide correspondence with a number of European scientists and socio-political public figures, was Academician of Belarusian Academy of Sciences, and, in the opinion of a number of researchers, was a prominent scientist-polymath.

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From 1923 to 1927, Lastoŭski issued the journal “Kryvič” which in essence was a platform and manifesto of the author’s position with regard to the past and future of the Belarusians, their national identity, religious life, national self-determination, principles of coexistence with immediate geopolitical neighbours. Like the journal “Zadruga” edited by Jan Stachniuk, “Kryvič” in his title contained sufficiently obvious references to pre-Christian past of the people as exemplary dispensation. This makes it possible for us, at least in the first approximation, to draw a conclusion about specific ethno-nationalism as the common basis of personal and political identity of Lastoŭski and Stachniuk.

Therefore, only at first sight in both authors’ projects there are few obvious common interests, apart from formal (a common space-time continuum as a cultural condition and the ability to create these projects) general-methodological (availability of conservative-and-traditional searches of ethno-national identity in the paradigm) and content (their national-pointed nature) similarities. A more detailed consideration of V. Lastoŭski’s and J. Stachniuk’s views enables to detect a number of philosophic-and-ideological parallels. These parallels (of course, with the simultaneous designation of specificity introduced by each of the considered authors) can be drawn within the frames of two conceptual problem-thematic blocks: *models of national history* and *projects of national rebirth*.

Grounding of the Models of National History and the Factors of Its Stagnation

A rigid analysis of national, respectively Belarusian and Polish, culture in the early 1920s, a statement of its tragic past and recessionary present, including the categorical estimations of it state given on this basis, evidence that Lastoŭski and Stachniuk were resolute and uncompromising authors of not just national- renascence but obviously nationalistic projects as well. These projects appeared crucial in their lives and predetermined many things in their creation and activities: the appropriate problem-story fabric of texts and their stylistic features, attempts of personal embedding into the political field of Belarus and Poland of the first half of the past century and self-contradictory views, romanticizing of national history and appeals to risky and frequently unreasonable socio-political experiments (for example, Stachniuk’s creation of Slavic Empire or Lastoŭski’s Baltic-Belarusian federation).

However, perhaps the major indicator of radicalism of the positions of the one and the other was sharp and decisive condemnation of historical reasons, circumstances and consequences of long-lasting political dependence of Belarus and Poland, their centuries-long unequal-term incorporation into a wider geopolitical context. Moreover, Lastoŭski puts all the blame for a deplorable state of things in culture on invasive policy of the next-door neigh-

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bours, Russia and Poland, for a century-long Polonization and the next two-century Russification of the Belarusian lands (Lastoŭski 1997: 354–359). In his turn, Stachniuk tends to seek for metaphysical reasons of national decadence in the vicious essence of Christian (Catholic) culture itself (Stachniuk, 1996: 98).

The conviction in self-sufficient potential of cultural development of "Kryvič people" and extortive (colonialist) nature of Polish and Russian influences on them was vividly demonstrated by Lastoŭski in his periodization of Belarusian history. He singles out four stages of it with which a four-phase dynamics of national ethnonym and national-cultural decadence among other things is related (Lastoŭski, 1997:364-365). This is, firstly, the stage *of Kryvian-Ruthenian* (10th-13th centuries) is characterized with conquest of Slav lands by Varangians-Ruthenians, forcible replacement of pro-Slavic (pagan) religion with Christianity and renaming the Kryvič into "Ruses" or "Rus'".

Already at this stage, in author's opinion, we can speak about tragic and catastrophic for the whole consequent Belarusian history phenomenon– a peculiar kind of "Varangian-Ruthenian yoke: "*the beginning of Varangian-Ruthenian power in our history should be treated in the same way as Tatar irruption in Russian history … […] …in the struggle of the Kryvičes against Ruthenians they, in the first place, defended their land from foreign invasion, and secondly, in this struggle two systems of government were weighing themselves: on the one hand (on behalf of the Kryvičes), the efforts were directed to protect a deeply democratic Slavic people government system, and on the other (on behalf of the Ruthenian-Varangian), together with political slavery Norman feudalism was set forward*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 387).

Moreover, not only did the Varangians-Ruthenians give nothing positive in cultural and political aspect to Kryvič people, but also having borrowed from them their culture themselves continued their predacious conquests: "*having been slavonized from the Kryvičes and the Polans (Ukrainians), the Varangians, with the help of recruited warriors among the Kryvičes and Polans, conquer, under the pretext of Baptism, Finns and Mongolians, at the same time imposing them Slavic liturgy and Slavic language in the administration, slavonize the Finn-Mongolian tribes on the banks of the Oka, Volga, Kama, Pechora, Northern Dvina and Don rivers*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 391). Then a kind of "cultural repose" comes – *Lithuanian –Russian stage* (13th – the end of 18th century) with the replacement of the Kryvič-Ruthenian dynasty (Rahnieda-Uladzimir) with the Lithuanian dynasty (Alhierd) and affiliation of a new name to the Kryvičes-Ruthenians – "Lithuania-Rus'". Even though here the reunion of the ethnic Kryvič with their "Baltic roots" takes place, however, they are still confused in the process and specifics of their national identity, because now they are at the same time both "Lithuanians" (by state affiliation) and "the Ruthenians" (or Orthodoxies, by religion).

The third stage – *Lithuanian-Polish* – lasts until the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian state. It is marked with a dramatic for the whole culture

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discrepancy of masses of people (Orthodoxies) with the elite (Belarusian Catholics who named themselves Poles). Started at that period, the process of "voluntary denationalization" when *"the sons of our Fatherland hired out to aliens, and richen their barns and apiaries!"* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 248) became one of the key factors of further erosion of national identity of Kryŭski ethnos.

At last, with the fall of the Union, the fourth stage come, a Russian-Belarusian one, when the Orthodox clergy and Orthodox nobility (*szlachta*) (the remaining part of "Belarusian higher-ups") moved to a Russian wagon train "*en mass*" (simultaneously naming themselves "Ruthenians" or "Russians") and Kryŭski people got their official name – Belarusians. "*In this way, the tops of our national tree were gradually drying up and falling away from people's stub…*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 365–366).

The people themselves, owing to permanent political and cultural dependence from alien influences over the last several centuries, evolved into a specific "Belarusian-peasant" cast of ignorant, illiterate people who did not manage to establish themselves both nationally and culturally: "*over the last 200 years, Belarusians were not a nation. They made up a table peasant cast that was replenished from nowhere and new forces and the best and the noblest representatives of them diverged* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 324). And this is despite the fact that a Belarusian, compared to a Pole or a Russian is "*both more sophisticated and artful and even more hardworking… A Belarusian can be compared to German opposed to a Great Russian. Here is an example: we live on an argil sand ground and we have no famine whereas in Great Russia people starve almost every year although they live on humus soil.*"

Therefore, "*neither Warsaw nor Moscow can give Belarusian people freedom. Both Moscow and Warsaw bring ruins and destruction.*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 384). Lastoŭski has a strong belief that the only viable prospect for Belarusian national development is the prospect of freestanding independent rebirth without any "cultural-political patronage" of their geopolitical neighbours, since "*our historical traditions have nothing in common with either Moscow oriental absolutism or Polish anarchical szlachta*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 384).

If Lastoŭski analyses and criticizes national historical and cultural process from anti-Russian and anti-Polish standpoint, then Stachniuk exposes anti-Christian in its nature point of view. He sees the main reasons for decline of the Polish culture in the evolution of Christianity itself, which historically successively reveals its internal self-destructive guidelines in the form of personalism, nihilism, hedonism, didacticism and spiritualism. Stachniuk proposes a large-scale philosophical-cultural program of criticism of the so-called "wspakultury" as anti-culture or "contra-culture" (Seradzan). Singling out in the history of humankind two ways of life and two ways of thought – *vegetative* (passive, conformist, uncreative) and *heroic* (active, independent, creative), the Polish philosopher associates with them firstly, the correspond-

ing cultural forms: anti-culture as cultural-creative simulation and culture as such as a permanent creative performance – and secondly, opposite ways of historical national self-determination: extensive and intensive. The culture is understood by Stachniuk as emanation of creative will of the Universe, as a "*natural order reorganization process, bringing together the elements and joining them under a different formula owing to which there appears a new type of power subordinated by man*" (Stachniuk, 1996: 10).

Among living species only the man has a specific condition and attribute of cultural creation – "*ability to creation, enigmic creativity*". (Stachniuk, 1996: 19). As for the total "contra-culture" (*wspakulturatotalna*), it favours to both individual passivity in socio-natural world and to commonly-known choice of "inactive" historical way, dipping of the nation into the abyss of "dis-history"("*ezdziejow*", stagnation and cultural devolution).

The main factor pinning a "vegetative" way of life of individuum and socium in culture in general and in Slavic (including Polish) culture in particular, ideals of the anti-culture and "inactive actions" was, according to Stachniuk, Western Christianization and the subsequent domination of Catholicism.

Christianization of Poland appeared a "*vaccination of cancer of anti-culture to its organism*" (Stachniuk, 2006a:23) which also became a pivot of national consciousness. As a result "*Poland and the whole Slavic world (Slowianszczyna) over a thousand years have not lived a life of self-interest. Since the moment we realized cemeterial emptiness into which we were locked in our hearts, we have been yearning after full-fledged creative life, this yearn is inherent not only to Poles but also to the whole Slavic world … As a result of this, the Slavic world (Slawia) has lost its own soul and over the whole millennium has lived as if hypnotized, weak-willed, immersed into barely conscious experience of alien values which totally disorganize the forces of the Slavic world (Slawia). This explains the apathy and a heavy-with-sleep style of Slavic life, full of … melancholy, resulting from internal marasmus*" (Stachniuk, 2006b:15).

The processes of conversion of pagan Slavic peoples lead them to cultural apoplexy *(paraliz kulturowy)* which causes a complete abruption with tradition with a consequent slowdown of spiritual processes. Notably this phenomenon is equally incident both for Catholic Poland and Czech and South and East Slavs worshiping Orthodoxy of Greek rite.

In this regard, in J. Stachniuk's historical and philosophical concepts the leading motive is the problematization of culture-creative value of Catholicism "*Catholicism has grown on the soil of vegetation and the basis of vegetation constitutes its deepest base… This is a religious sentiment of slowdown; corresponding to inactivity … The essence of Catholicism is that it is directed to a disaster of any social community*" (Stachniuk, Dzieje…).

Stachniuk believes that beginning from the 16th century, the internal development of Poland can be regarded as total conceptual "Catholic experi-

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ment" on the living people's body, submissively yielding to it. "*The Polish logos and ethos are a system of values, forcibly superimposed and established on the foundation of initial ethical feeling. Naturalistic worldview and ethics of our Slavic ancestors as humanistic consciousness in its nature …were destroyed. Having destroyed the mental outlook of the Slavs, who were positively looking at the world, Christianity imposed its own vision of the world, its own understanding of what is good, truth, beauty.* A *positive view of the world by our ancestors-pagans, their admiration of existence, thirst for energy and creative power from evangelistic point of view should be defined as devildom*" (Stachniuk, 2006a:29). As a result, Polish national consciousness imbibed social and existential ideal of Catholicism – the ideal of a desert or a monastic cell – which substantially influences the economic, political and cultural life of the society.

Notably, the higher the level of realization of this ideal, the more miserable and depredated social life is in all its dimensions. And on the contrary, the weaker the realization of the Catholic ideal, the more creative opportunities people actualize in their everyday life.

Slavic national self-consciousness derogated by history and religion, in Stachniuk's opinion, can primarily elaborate an extensive renaissance idea, related rather with fruitless "*compensative dreams of Slavic empire as powerful and formidable for its superior neighbours*" than change of state of affairs, acquisition of national independence and readiness to own cultural creativity (Stachniuk, Dzieje…). Thus, the Polish people over the last three centuries give their own transcription of this renascence idea, suggesting instead of real efficient breakthrough a definite "relaxation", dreamy type of existence, absolutely inorganic to any tension of physical and spiritual forces. This type is based by imperatives of romatization of country life (*sielskość anielskość*), some "life vocations" (*wakacje życiowe*), relaxed way of life-view and existence (*odprężenie*). In other words, states Stahnyuk, "*vegetative individualism is a fundamental feature of the Polish national character*" (Stachniuk, 2006a:34).

The alternative to an extensive renaissance idea and the only way to get safe Polish (and the whole Slavic) culture from heavy Christian anti-cultural burden can be an intensive ideal of national renascence in the form of Slavic pan-humanism.

Projects of National Rebirth: from a Belarusian to a Kryvič, from a Pole Catholic to a Pole

Lastoŭski's program of national renascence includes at least the following items-stages: firstly, to establish a process of self-identification of Belarusians by returning the people their historical name and to prove its "Baltic roots", secondly, to justify the essence of "national messengership" of Kryvič culture to humankind, thirdly, to create national-religious organization.

Lastoŭski is confident of the necessity of authentic ethnonym for the successful rebirth process: "*Today, when the nation is making efforts to come alive again from its very roots and is thoroughly seeking each trait of its individuality (in the language, customs, art and writing), it is important for the people to recollect their own name in addition — the name which says about the best days of life of our people, with their liberal veche and glorious battles for their independence. It is important to make a note by the very name of the people that they are not an artificial trait of somebody's individuality but individuality in and of itself... The desire to put the name 'Kryvič' to the due height logically comes from the understanding of rebirth-national movement which must rest upon the historical past and selfhood individuality of our people*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 384–385).

Lastoŭski clearly distinguishes the notions of "Belarusians" and "Kryvičes", however, not always giving them axiological accents, but stating specific, from his point of view, historical realities: "*As 'Belarusians', we are only imprints of general-Russian individuality... However, as 'Kryvičes', we are a specific individuum, a specific Slavic tribe with our own rich past, our specific language, territory and spiritual creativity*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 386). Thus, as only a transitional stage and part of "Russians", "Belarusians" are doomed to the fate of small, inconspicuous, "non-individual" people in Russian imperial "*conglomerate of tribes and ethnic groups from the Baltic to Vladivostok*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 398).

If Between Kryvian-Belarusian and Russian (as well as Polish) people the organizational relation can be only extortive-political, while with the Baltic people it has a natural-historical character since "*we are closer connected by our origin with the peoples of the Baltic states, which we followed during the migration, and, therefore, absorbed the remaining west-Finnish and Lithuanian elements, than with the Muscovites, who are our colonization to the east, dissolved in Mongolian and east-Finnish elements … […] …we, being close to the Muscovites in language (Slavonized Mongolians), anthropologically represent an absolutely separate type*" (Lastoŭski,1997: 436). Therefore, a statelegal future is also seen by Lastoŭski in a certain form of Belarusian-Lithuanian community life: "*Only in relations with fraternal democratic countryside peoples of Lithuania, Ukraine and others can Belarus come to its liberation, realize its state independence … […] So, long live to independent peasant democratic Belarus, long live to fraternal rapprochement of Belarusian and Lithuanian peoples!*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 358).

Thus, for Lastoŭski, the basic vector of the rebirth policy and practice was "*to extract our people from Russian hypnosis and show them different values and ways of national life, to draw attention to the necessity of closer rapprochement with our Baltic neighbours...Having good will and applying certain efforts, we, perhaps, will create the Baltic Federation with Kryvian people as a*

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useful member. In my conviction, only having founded such a federative state from Palessie and Dniepr up to the Gulf of Finland, we can manage to protect ourselves from the threat of Moscow mergence" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 437).

If to appeal and to return to own historical traditions, historical name and historical "co-brother" is a tactic task of national renascence, then the strategy of this process is awareness by the Belarusians of their general-historic mission, or awareness of that "all-mankind task" which *Kryvian* people are gifted with. Such a mission is a fastening value and ideological principle for national psychology as well as for successful state construction. Besides, without comprehension it is impossible to speak about "people's individuality" as a condition for self-dependence and efficiency in history. Upon a closer view, the historical mission of Kryvičes fall into two constituents: firstly, into "the Slavic-Baltic message" as "gathering"of all three branches of Kryvič people in a single sociocultural and political – state perspective and, secondly, into "panhuman message" under which "*Kryvič Slavic world as a whole must give the mankind new cultural values... Our historical task is decentralism and grass-roots democracy. These will bring us new values …*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 399).

Realization of all the above-mentioned aims not least of all depends on developed spirituality of the people, on its axiological orienting points and ideals. And this is provided with the corresponding state of affairs in the religious sphere of the society. Unfortunately, notes Lastoŭski, "*we have no religious individuality, and the worst part is the absence of will to find religious individuality in ourselves. We even do not try to do that …*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 397). Centuries-long persecution and oppressions of all that belongs to national identity touched primarily religion, when "*the 'Ruthenian/Russian faith' was imposed by enemies… Everything which was Christian was hostile; was 'Russian'. Everything that was local (rustic), became pagan, impure, foul, scorned*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 354).

This resulted in vagueness of the national Belarusian identity. This included, besides other things, both religious disorientation and uncertainty and a wonderful mix of pagan, Orthodox, Catholic, Greek-Catholic traditions in national culture. Nevertheless, such confessional mosaic as well as religious tolerance in prospect of forthcoming radical socio-cultural transformations can work as and advantage in creating a salutary atmosphere and fertile soil for the appearance of new optimal church-religious projects. Lastoŭski has a strong belief that "*if we do not want the aliens to be in control of spirituality of our people, we must seek for and find the ways and forms of independent solution of a religious problem. We need to create such a form of Christian church organization that could stand on the ground of our national interests without looking around either to the east or to the west*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 414).

Among the key imperatives of the Polish national rebirth, J. Stachniuk distinguishes pan-humanism Slavic cultural revolution, "zadruga myth" as an axiological-ideological postulate of a new national worldview and all-Slavic "zadruga religion" of anti-Christian, neo-pagan nature in its essence.

J. Stachniuk's national revival project is reflected in his specific philosophy "Zadruga",[2] the main thesis of which is transformation of society along the lines of heroic collectivism and release of the infinite creative potential dormant in it. This, in fact, is pan-humanism in the version of Stachniuk – total emancipation of an individual and his creativity. At the same time, both nationalism and class struggle in this process are secondary and serve only as instrument to attain the given aim. Various groups can realize pan-humanistic heroic social ideal depending on historical conditions.

Collective-heroic national-cultural prospect is contrasted by Stachniuk to present-day state of anti-culture and "Pole-Catholic flow" *(samotok polakatolicki)* permeating all Polish history of the last centuries. This tendency is the most dangerous for the future of Poland since it restrains the worldview horizon of a Pole as a citizen in the frames of his parish (observance) transforming him into "a Pole-Catholic". A living position like this does not give an opportunity for adequate perception and transformation of the world, adjudging a man – as well as culture – to vegetable existence in passiveness and decadence. Therefore "*the most significant revolution is overcoming Pole-Catholic sentiments. It will be a revolution in the world of spiritual values. Substitution of anti-cultural individuality with heroic individuality must make the content of this revolution*" (Stachniuk, 2006a: 67). Ultimately, the cultural revolution in Poland must lead to release of the "element of pan-humanism" from the captivity of anti-culture, mercilessly amputate all "invalid organs and mentality" of people's organism. "*The revision of culture should be carried out radically. It does not mean complete negation. Only anti-culture should be withdrawn*" (Stachniuk, 2006a: 72).

As a result of such national-cultural self-purification, a base pan-humanism "zadruzny myth" must come and take the place of anti-culture with its false and pernicious ideas. Its main purpose and main content will be "Slavic super-biology" *(nadbiologia sławska)* as a result of coping with Slavic bios (as all vegetative in life and thought) by creative-heroic Slavic community. For the first time, namely in this myth creativity inherits its complete self-senti-

[2] Zadruga (Serbian-Croatian) is historically common among South Slavs and refers to a type of rural family community. It includes several generations of ancestor of one father with their wives and children (20-30 people); the zadruga held its property, herds and money in common. The zadruga eventually went into decline beginning in the late 19th century (Large Encyclopedic Dictionary …). Задруга (zadruga, zadruzna kuca) is a small community formed of several families related to each other rather by economic and territorial than family ties; it is especially common among South Slavs of Serbian-Croatian tribe. All members of zadruga are rather equal. Currently zadruga in this primeval is in effect only among South Slavs, but it is gradually going into decline… (Encyclopedic Dictionary).

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ment and self-awareness, and apart from this, will get the tools for realization of its existence and development. For this purpose, in its nearest history, the Slav world must successively solve the following tasks: to "*release from initial Slavic biological mass the element of creative will*"; to "*create an organization transforming the released creative impulses into a spontaneous activity of super-active biological organism of Slavia*"; to "*defeat hostile forces restraining the process of formation by Slavia the authentic world of culture*" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 164).

The Polish National Cultural Revolution and the whole Polish Nationalism, according to Stachniuk, cannot and must not retreat into their own regional boundaries, but are destined to become a motor of Common Slavic rebirth. The Polish people will become "*a Prometheus of the degraded Slavic World*" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 172), and Polish nationalistic worldview will be the "resurrection of Slavic soul". Particulary in this lies the whole-Slavic historical mission of the Polish culture.

Historical mission of Poland, as the author understands it, has also a specific "totalistic" cultural and political measurement which lies in the author's conception of Common Slavic sub-national state and even pan-Slavic empire. In general, criticizing the "totalistic temptation" of European culture of the 1930s–1940s as internally growing from it and being an "exclusive" form of use of increasing strength and power of the masses *(mocy sprawczej)* (Stachniuk, Zagadnienie...), Stachniuk, however, is influenced by it himself. In his project of future of all-Slavic heroic-collective commonwealth, totalitarian accents are obviously present. We will try to enlist the basic of them.

Firstly, the name itself and centering image-symbol of his philosophy – "Zadruga" as old-Slavic tribal and economic community – refer us to the archaic values of tradition, patriarchal, undivided authority, total collectivism. In its turn, collectivism as an integral feature of author's script of future life of happiness and prosperity contrasts to personalism and acquires the status of the central idea in "Zadruga" philosophy. Stachniuk perceived collectivism as anti-personality approach to life – identification of own needs with the needs of society. In Stachniuk's society, all the people must provide the basic need for each individual, and economic motivation related to job must give place to the motivation of moral nature. To make this idea work, a fundamental transformation of public mentality is required (Seradzan).

Secondly, under "Zadruga" ideology, only homogenous society can realize great, creative objectives. Socio-cultural project by Jan Stachniuk is a total state which must cover each aspect of life of its nationals. A state like this must be created around a single, universal, homogenous worldview which will supersede Christian values (Grott, 1989: 57). This worldview will be centered by "creative myth" (*mit tworzycielski*), and the obligatory social institution responsible for creation of corresponding "myth-ideological matrixes" is defined by Stachniuk as a "laboratory of historical-and-creative thought" *(laboratorium myśli dziejotworczej)*.

Thirdly, Stachniuk doubts the cultural potential of other Slavs (apart from Poles and Russians), on the basis of which they could realize qualitative transformation of their social and economic life. "*Can we generally account the paralysed with inertness Ukrainian, Serbian, Croatian peoples as the force of history? The only true policy here can be the use of them as a raw material for the melting furnace of Zadruga myth in order to create common – Slavic nation (nadnarod sławski) with the corresponding ethnic and regional specific features*" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 151). Only in Poland or Russia, under Stachniuk, a flame of new life can ignite. The philosopher, however, cherishes hopes that the leader of Slavic world will, nevertheless, be the Polish nation, since namely Polish people "*had the deepest and the most dramatic fall under the burden of Judeo-Christian myth*" and therefore is the nation "*that will be the first to manage to overcome innerness and realize unimaginable in its consequences Slavic revolution*" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 171–175).

Fourthly, the realization of historical mission of Poland will have Slavic Empire (*Imperium Sławskie*) as its logical and organizational accomplishment, able to overcome the "sclerosis of inertness" with all the rest fraternal peoples – Czech, Ukrainian, Serbian, Russian and others – and make them a single common-Slavic nation *(nadnarod sławski)*. Namely this nation will have enough strength for the first time and ever to suggest the world a special imperialism, extremely moralistic and aimed at attaining the greatest and the most humanistic ideals of mankind. Paradoxically, but the only way to construct this pan-humanist empire is force or revolution, since "*zadruga myth cannot be realized in a conventional evolution increment into inert history. For complete negotiation of inert history, conquering of political power is imperative*" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 172). From here follows the necessity and inevitability of the Slavic revolution (*rewolucji sławskiej*).

It is indicative that Stachniuk directly connects revolutionary transformations and implementation of a new way of life in Slavic empire with religious attitude to the world. For him, the highest human's religious task is consolidation of living power of existence, permanent filling of its impetuous rhythm with still new energies (Stachniuk, 1996: 66). Therefore, namely in religious-aesthetic sphere, the original essence of Slavic culture can maximally express itself. Correspondingly, the religious life itself will transfigure. First of all, "*the religious sentiment of the released from inertness Poles, Czechs, Slavs in general must create a new Slavic myth from the elements of their cultural-historic traditions*", on the basis of which a new common Slavic religion appears *(religia zadrużna)*. An anti-Christian nature and "heroic attitude" will unambiguously be its principle features.

The new religion will be a "hitherward" religion, the religion of a human's active life position, sound of health and joy, maximal tension of all physical and spiritual strengths. Churches and monasteries will be replaced with stadiums, gyms and institutions of hygiene to sustain and develop "*optimal*

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biophysical form, perfect condition of muscles, nerves, organs for mystic union with the pulsing existence of creativity sphere" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 163). In its essence, this is a program of neo-pagan rebirth of both religious-ideological system of traditional value priorities and behavioral models. In other words, this is the program of modern Zadruga as a single cultural-and-political, spiritual-and-religious and social-and-economic common-Slavic neo-archaic community.

Precisely because of its obvious neo-archaic and neo-pagan nature, Stachniuk's renaissance project is not popular and is not in demand with the majority of present-day Polish national-oriented circles for which the immutable values are the Catholic values. In this sense, "zadruga project" which is being developed today by the activists of Wroclaw publishing "Toporzeł", including Zrzeszenie Rodzimej Wiary, "Niklot", Narodowy Zespol Koncepcyjno-Studyiny, "Szczep Rogate Serce", Zakon Zadrugi "Północny Wiłk" and others that inspire the activity of a number of neo-pagan groups and unions can be regarded as a kind of "ideological counterweight" to Polish Catholic radical-conservative nationalism.

Let us sum up. As shown by the analysis of philosophical-ideological and cultural-political views by Lastoŭski and Stachniuk, already at the first approximation similarities and differences in their positions are obvious.

Among similarities are their conclusions about a dramatic nature and root causes of the crisis processes in national cultures. In general, these causes can be reduced to catastrophic in its historical consequences "external interferences" of European neighbours in Belarusian and Polish nation sovereign life. Namely the centuries-long aggressive political and religious influences (Russian and Polish) on Belarusian culture (Lastoŭski) and west-European on Polish culture (Stachniuk) paralyzed the national spirit and will to self-development. Both authors are seeking for life-giving sources and renascent impulses in the cultural and religious being of their peoples of pre-Christian age. It was there, in the opinion of both authors, foundations of cultural and ethnic identity, carrying vitality and will for national independence developed and conserved: the historical name of the people, their language, the autochthonous (pagan) values, samples of the optimal state system and religious organization.

However, in the simulation of programs for the future national-cultural development, Lastoŭski and Stachniuk clearly dissent. The former, in our view, evolves from the moderate nationalist positions to the more pronounced nationalist platform, at the same time, in whole, however, trying to split European (including Christian) values and imperatives. In Lastoŭski's opinion, the conditions for an independent and prosperous development of Belarusian (Kryvian) ethnos and state are democratic, possibly federal forms of political and legal system, as well as peaceful and equitable coexistence with neighbours and a large-scale national-cultural construction.

As for the J. Stachniuk's project, it is sustained in a more radical, left-centrist tonality and in the present-day context more likely in the ideological field of European "new right-wingers" as the initiators and theoreticians of "new culture" concept (De Herte, 2009). In this project, the ideas of messianism, pan-Slavism and totalitarianism are clearly traced. In addition, the Polish philosopher went down in history as the founder of national thought and apologist for the "neo-pagan cultural turn" (Seradzan) and as an implacable anti-Catholic thinker, questioning and criticizing the whole system of European-Christian axiological constants. The abovementioned specific features of the both national-rebirth projects find their concentrated expression in the centering images-symbols of "Kryvija"and "Zadruga". Assigning the similar specific "perspective-retrospective" vectorness of the expected socio-dynamics based on the communal-collectivist and patriarchal, pre-Christian dominants, they, however, do not coincide in the content and ideology.

"Kryvija" in different periods of Lastoŭski's activity is supposed either as an independent national mono-state functioning on the basis of democratic values (even though in specific interpretation by the author) in the European geopolitical space, or as autonomous-national socio-cultural and politico-economic entity within the "Baltic federation".

As for "Zadruga", it, as a historic landmark, presupposes a clear-cut imperial-universalist set to "all-Slavic gathering" and Slavic revival. Here, concrete political-economic and tactical aspects of future of social organism are not of primary value, what matters is the significance of this organism as the only proper and messianic in essence totalitarian paradigm of social and cultural development. If the prospect of "Kryvija" sets in the first place their own national and local-historical landmarks to the process of self-identification of Belarusians, then the program of "Zadruga" puts forward the political and ideological values of Slavic unity, Slavic imperialism and Slavic paganism for Poles.

Time has shown the strength and weakness of both the national-renaissance models. Actualization in a new key (namely, in the context of qualitative social-economic and geopolitical transformations of the first third of the 20th century) of the "national question", the attempt to solve it on the platform of political and government reforms and addressing the origins and specifics of the national-cultural traditions, open debates on national issues in relevant publications — all this can be attributed to the positive aspects of social and political activities of Lastoŭski and Stachniuk.

The most important serious drawback, among others, was their "romantic fascination" with the concepts "people", "Slavic World", "heroism", "collectivism", "popular democracy", "anthropological features", etc. — i.e. with all that is semantically closer to the ideology of "*Völkische Bewegung*" (Potrzebowski, 1982).

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Therefore, both concepts can be characterized (chastising or elevating) on various grounds, including in an extremely wide range of socio-political, historical and philosophical theories. In the case of Stachniuk — from National Bolshevism (Seradzan), National Communism and left national signal-revolutionary totalitarianism (Tomaszewicz, 2000) to the right collectivist extremism (Piskorski). In the case of Lastoŭski — from Belarusian antifascism (as national response to the 1930s fascism and Nazism), anti-Polish nationalism (Labyntsev) to even historical dilettantism (Fadeev, 2008). But clearly one cannot deny them in one -- in original, bold and optimistic looking at the historical future of the Belarusian and Polish peoples.

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STUDY OF BELARUSIAN ELITES: BETWEEN ALGEBRA AND GEOGRAPHY

After Nina Antanovič, the study of elites in Belarus has become topical among political science experts in the context of the 1996 Referendum which led to the formation of administrative top-down command structure, restraint the possibilities of political competition and marked taking up more pronounced autocratic features by the Belarusian regime. As a consequence, political-science analysts turned to the analysis of the essence and patterns of democracy, local elites, problems of political regimes, democratic transit (in which counter-elites had to play a significant role), problems of interaction between intellectuals and authorities (Antanovič, 2004). This paper is an attempt to give an overview of historical account in the study of the Belarusian elite over the last 20 years.

Michael Urban and the Belarusian Soviet elite. The first advanced study of the Belarusian elite was the work by American researcher Michael Urban (Urban, 1989)[2] which was published in 1989. Using the corresponding mathematical tool (the researcher titled his work "algebra" for a reason), Urban investigates the examples of recruiting of elite to the BSSR party and administrative apparatus in the period from 1966 to 1986 (actually, in the times of Brezhnev "stagnation"). The author analyses a career ladder of 3127 individuals and 2034 current positions. He comes to the conclusion that the model of recruitment is very similar to Markov chain. This means that the rotation of vacancies actually does not depend on the influence of the center. Urban also shows that the Belarusian Soviet elite consisted of separate patronage groups which fought with each other for political influence: "partisans", "Minsk city industrial group", "Brezhnev's protégés" describing the key features and tendencies of development of the Belarusian Soviet elite in 1960–1980.

Burst of dissertations (2001–2003). The early 2000s lay the foundation to the study of elites. In post-Referendum time Belarusian political science acquires its structure as well. The center of elite research is the BSU, where elite studies become a significant theme for dissertations of the first

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[2] At the beginning of 2010, its Belarusian translation was published.

graduates-researchers. As early as in 2001, two dissertations on close themes were upheld there. The first thesis "Theoretical Problems of Formation and Circulation of Elites in the US Political System" was written by Uladzimir Padkapajeŭ (Padkapajeŭ, 2001), the second, written by Natallia Liachovič-Pietrakova and titled "Transformation of Political Elite in Post-Socialist Countries" (Liachovič-Petrakova, 2001) was devoted namely to Belarusian society.

Two years later, Aksana Važhurava touched upon the subject of the party elite in her thesis "The Parties of Belarus in Their Struggle For Political Leadership at Present Time (Social-and-Political Analysis)" (Vožhurava, 2003). In total, the dissertations make 10% from all defended in 2000–2009, which demonstrates the significance of the topic for Belarusian researchers.

Analytics and non-official political science. However, the main issues regarding the political elite can be found in analytics and "non-official" political science. They are basically texts related to the analysis of timely political events. Among the analytical materials where this topic is reviewed, it's worth to mention the following collected books: "Belarusian Political System and Presidential Elections" (2001), "Contemporary History of Belarusian Parliamentarism" (2005), "Local Elections in Contemporary Political History of Belarus" (2003) and the collected works "Belarusian Political Arena and the 2006 Presidential Elections" (2007). Apart from this, the problem of elite identity is touched on in the collected book "Belarus: Neither Europe Nor Russia" (2006). Special (Kazakievič, 2007) and analytical (Čavusaŭ, 2005) articles also contribute to the study of the theme. All these works for the most part can be referred to independent political science unrelated to official political science. The matter is that intensification of ideological constituent of political regime restricted the scope of topics for political investigations in official institutions. Firstly, it is for regime's benefit to simulate the ruling elite's integrity; secondly, it is inconceivable for the regime to name the opposition the elite even with the prefix "counter". Furthermore, after 2003, the official political science re-orients itself to the problems of national ideology.

Analytics of the division of the elite. Piotra Natčyk is believed to be one of the most active researchers of Belarusian elites. In his texts, he focuses on the specific nature of Belarusian nomenclature class, branch elites, on various aspects of staffing policy and struggle of concrete "clans" ("silaviki" (power ministries officers), "Mahilioŭ grouping", etc).

In 2001, when the second presidential elections took place and Lukašenka was elected to a second term of office, it was extremely topical to talk of "nomenclature upheaval" (even the strategy of election of a single candidate represented by the trade-union leader Uladzimir Hančaryk, was based on the logics of impact on the nomenclature).

It was the opinion that the ruling elite were variegated, with considerable contradictions and particular interests of which it was supposed to take advan-

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tage during the election campaign. As it is well-known, their attempts failed: however, the interest to the elite structure resumed after the new appointments of personnel. The text by Natčyk is devoted namely to the examination of these issues. He writes: *"The specific character of attitude to changes and determination to defend these changes are the very things that build the foundation for the division of different trends in elite. And these trends, in their turn, are the results of previous development of the elite"* (Natčyk, 2001).

Among the factors which influenced formation of different trends in the structure of the Belarusian elite, the author singles out the following ones: industrial, agrarian and "bordering". The industrial factor stimulated large enterprises functionaries to improve their relations with the authority center, to orient to central administration; the agrarian factor indicated interest in preservation of influence at the local level, whereas the bordering position of Belarus with Europe gave more weight to security forces; security service and border guards. Following M. Urban's research, Natčyk traces the genealogy of Belarusian nomenclature starting from the post-war period. In the 1980s, industrial elite takes the place of the "partisan" elite. This is conditioned by the growth of large enterprises and their party committees. In Natčyk's opinion, namely on the relationships of the "partisan" and industrial elites the confrontation in the system of redistribution of power in the country is based. Even in post-Soviet time two structural models arise: subordinations (the "partisan" elite) and clusters (the industrial elite). In the BSSR, the central elite was formed through the industrial model, and the regional elite was shaped through the agrarian model: the central elite had a possibility to move to the highest level but could not control regional level, whereas regional elites had poor chances to move to the republican center, but controlled the regions (Natčyk, 2001).

In the time of disintegration of the Soviet Union, the agrarian-industrial elite obtained an opportunity to move to political level of the Republic through the elections to the 12th Supreme Soviet which became the parliament of collective farm directors and other regional functionaries whereas the nomenclature of central organs started to lose control, retaining, however, prevailing positions in power bodies.

Apart from the two mentioned elites, Natčyk admits a strong organizational capacity of law-enforcement authorities' and security officials' elite which the central elite attempted to challenge. Another participant of the process, according to Natčyk, is the new national-democratic counter-elite which threatens the position of the nomenclature.

The researcher points out several stages of elite formation in Belarus after the first presidential elections. The first stage — parliamentary or pseudo-democratic — when Lukašenka appointed high officials through personal contacts and regional acquaintanceship ("Mahilioŭ group", depu-

ties of the 12th Supreme Soviet as well as the representatives of the high-level nomenclature).

At the first stage, Natčyk singles out three main trends of the central elite: the old elite, security officials and parliamentarians. The old elite retained key positions in the economic sphere; considerable rotations among security officials took place; the parliamentarians are characterized as variegated and unstable group.

From 1996, industrial and economic elite were losing their former positions. The first reason for that was the policy of the Belarusian regime in the field of economy and the fact that the top of the pyramid was occupied by the old nomenclature elite which was needed by Lukašenka as an instrument to carry out the expansion to the east. The "Russian" factor took on significance in political field and the relations with Russia became an important resource for old nomenclature elite. Stepwise, regional, industrial and republican elites were losing their positions to the advantage of well-organized power ministries' officers. These processes characterize the second stage of elite formation. The third stage is marked by changes in Belarusian domestic and foreign policy related to the coming 2001 presidential elections and to the fall of urgency of the eastern factor. The key priority becomes the need to tighten the control inside the country. The old nomenclature elite lose their influence and, on the contrary, power ministries officers gain their significance. The industrial-economic elite becomes more dependent on the center. At the end of the article the author expresses hope that, to the advantage of the democratic opposition, the discontented elite groupings will be able to unite.

Elite and revolution. The article by Jury Čavusaŭ (Čavusaŭ, 2005) continues the hot topic of nomenclature revolution, which the researcher himself relates to the "factor of oil", able to cause confrontation within the elite. The author makes an attempt to single out possible versions of the course of events in this adversarial position: the first version – the nomenclature will acknowledge their own interests different from the interests of the dictatorship, however, they will not be able to be shaped as a political class; the second version – they will acknowledge their interests and will be shaped as a political class, and this will be the evidence of ripening of revolutionary situation; the third version – the nomenclature will remain an amorphous group.

During the 2006 presidential elections, the opposition changed their strategy: they stopped orienting to nomenclature upheaval. At the same time, civil society structures fell off owing to "mopping up" of ideological field after the 2001 presidential elections and the business-elite became the only hope for the opposition. In analytical collection devoted to the 2006 elections there are reflections of why the business elite remained inert in the political campaign.

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Andrej Kamyševič (Kamyševič, 2007) notices that with the extension of private business, there can "*appear a sufficiently independent business-elite … which creates more conditions for its [political control] derestriction and internal tension*". Thus, the Belarusian authorities prevented the formation of consolidated business-elite through the domination of state-owned property which made it impossible for independent oligarch groups to appear, and, correspondingly, prevented decentralization of the ruling elite. Moreover, the corporate state was building the relations of patronage with these or those enterprises, thus giving the business-elite a vassal status, which was received in the process of competition and a lot of subjects in order to be included into the patronage-client relation were trying to be sincerely loyal.

In the same collected book devoted to the 2006 presidential elections, the paper by Andrej Liachovič (Liachovič, 2007) is worth mentioning in the contest of elite studies. The author focuses mainly on staff reshuffles and the existence of various "clans" within the ruling elite. The text in his work develops like in card solitaire, in which these or those cards are reshuffled in the same pack: we can see the familiar public figures – Škloŭ-Mahilioŭ clan which stands against the clan of power ministries officers headed by Viktar Šejman. The author proposes us to track staff reshuffles in which, in his opinion, there is a clue to understanding the standoff of various elites.

Elites and the results of the elections. In 2004, parliament elections took place in Belarus – therefore, the question of elites acquires a new relevance. First of all, a problem of analysis of various convocation parliament composition emerges. In the result of the 1990 elections, there appeared a "functionary" parliament with two basic platforms: democratic and the CPSU. The representatives of the latter in the 12th Supreme Soviet made a broad majority, and the mechanism of positions distribution, inherent to this elite functionary is characterized as "new clientism" (Natčyk, 2005). Basically, the researcher repeats his conclusions (Natčyk, 2001) in respect to Minsk nomenclature: they were not interested in using changes for extension of power in the Republic, since they oriented to advancement to all-Union level and the change gave more power to the non-party elite. As for the regional elite, in Natčyk's opinion, they were hardly oriented to be part of central power. The regional elite was not interested in the struggle for central power so long as this power gave them very little in financial aspect. Thus, the central elite did not want to change the governance model, local elites were feeble and informal elites (BNF) were in the bud of their formation. The 1995 elections to the 13th Supreme Soviet took place at the background of centralization of executive power and formalization of the party system. To resist these forces, the administrative authorities encouraged the representatives of top-bottom command structure to stand for elections to the parliament, especially as their participation enabled to use the administrative resource at local level.

In the result of elections, the right wing (BNF, BSDG) failed to take seats in the parliament; the most seats were occupied by left wing (KPB and Agrarian Party) as well as the National Unity Party which consisted namely of functionaries. Now the elites were separated as "authorities vs opposition". Natčyk points out that in the new parliament, 136 out of 198 deputies belonged to government functionaries and economic executives which carried on the tradition of functionary parliamentarism (Natčyk, 2005a). Natčyk defines such situation as provincialism: "*regional elites gain their significance not through social-economic development of their regions, not trough their work to gain the trust of the population, but through the authorization of the center (nominations, personal or patron-client relations)*" (Natčyk, 2005, a).

In these conditions, personal responsibility, loyalty to the center, adjustment of regional administration policy to changeability of center's policy become the criteria of efficiency of regional administration. In Natčyk's opinion, provincialism can be opposed only by concernment of elite to remain in the region and use the resources of the region for its benefit as well as the growth of civil community. However, the policy of the state is directed to encouragement of provincialism which is a significant pre-condition for the top-down command structure. Analysing the results of local elections, Natčyk notes that in 1990, local councils were procommunist (functionaries of the CPSU and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League made 67,4 % in them) (Natčyk, 2003a). In 1995, local communities were characterized with low activity and uncertainty which led to "nomenclature" nature of the deputy corps. Analysis of the elections to district (oblast) councils shows that the intelligentsia, business-elite, industrial and agricultural elite made a very small portion of deputies. The majority of council deputies were "status administrators" school directors, chief medical officers and heads of other state-financed organizations.

1999 marked the deficit of candidates — main composition is status, industrial and agricultural directorate. Natčyk believes that local elites in this case "*having chosen the role of the weak in policy and having agreed to perform secondary functions… became an important element in the chain of support of the central authorities. And they play this role against their own interests. Disorderliness and uncertainty of positions does not allow them to break this chain*" (Natčyk, 2003a).

Regional elites: review of empiric analysis. The results of local elections became the basis to study regional elites for Andrej Kazakievič as well. However, in his text (Kazakievič, 2007) he refers to a later period and tries to rest upon more detailed information. In his opinion, the analysis of deputy corps of district councils will help in understanding the specific features of regional elites. On the one hand, the author carries out the tradition of Natčyk (Natčyk 2003a; Natčyk, 2003b), however, on the other hand he refuses to ac-

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knowledge the methodological approaches of the latter and develops his own idea related to elites as structures: "*regional elites and clan groups are stable structures. They are strongly linked with the representation of local interests and have a relatively high social (and economic) assets*" (Kazakievič, 2004). The author explains why namely compositions of local councils are chosen for the analysis of the regional elite – this is the only transparent source of staff appointments in the regions.

At the same time, he admits insufficiency of such information since councils take inferior position compared to executive committees in the structure of actual local government. Apart from the composition of deputy corps, in A. Kazakievič's opinion, it is important to study the specific features of electoral "discipline" which has several criteria: how fully the council composition is formed (which percent of deputy corps was selected in the first round); the practice of the second round; availability of competition (multiple- or single-choice electoral districts). As the third additive, the author proposes to study parties and party representation. After Kazakievič, such information might be helpful to detect political tendencies at regional level. Using the available information, the author pays attention to the fact that in district councils party representation phenomenon can be observed, and this phenomenon needs a due explanation.

He also represents a table showing the party's membership distribution data in the deputy corps. This data shows that in districts, there are territorial specific features of party representation. Fourthly, in Kazakievič's opinion, age and gender structure can evidence certain tendencies. The author reasonably notices that demographic statistics enables – with a large degree of certainty — to speak about the level of modeling of councils' composition in case the councils include a great number of women, young people and pensioners. The author gives this statistics about all regions and the article is the source in which this data is arranged in scales.

Apart from this, Kazakievič makes conclusions about the tendencies in projecting the councils: under this information, 2003 is the most manipulative, and 2007 sees the tendency of derestriction. The fifth aspect of study of regional elites is their territorial representation. The analysis of information on regional councils shows that deputies to a lesser degree belong to local councils; correspondingly, there is a process of centralization when the candidates (and deputies) are no longer representatives of their electoral district and belong to the capital of the region. Distribution of regional councils' deputies by place of residence is illustrated in tables, and Viciebsk region is illustrated with a visual coloured map. It should be pointed out that the article was not aimed at detailed analysis of regional elites, on the first approximation, however, the author made interesting observations. Indeed, all abovementioned rates, including a demographic rate, illustrate rather stable

tendencies; nevertheless, these tendencies in the context of the article are illustrations to certain methodological approaches.

*“**Who governs?**”* Another approach to examine regional elites in the frames of study of Belarusian small towns is suggested by Andrej Jahoraŭ (Jahoraŭ, 2009). The study of small towns over the period of 2007-2008 was carried out by the Agency of Humanitarian Technologies which organized expeditions also trying to arrange local festivities in the same time. This research shows that behind the top-down command structure, there stands a different life, informal relations, different socio-economic indicators, unique conditions for this or that small town which leave their mark. And that makes it possible to speak about availability of various models of power and governance realization.

In his head notes, Jahoraŭ points out that Belarusian reality as a result of certain historical conditions is characterized by the estrangement of population from authority. It is accepted as standard. And realization of power in town is related to formal commanding positions. However, as it has been mentioned before, the author believes that power relations are not limited to the power of functionaries. The first division characteristic to power structure goes along the line “friends-or-foes”. “Friends” are those whose personal history is known for the locals, whereas “foes”, are mainly people who come from a different locality. This division acquires a special relevance in small towns where the population has a strong feeling of patriotism. The division “friends-or-foes” can also expand to the groups and structures related to town or its suburbs. Among “foes”, the following groups are singled out: governance of formal structure when town authorities belong to high government bodies; corporate structures – military, force, industrial commanding groups in central government bodies. Among “friends”, three types of groups are singled out: clans or families, quasi-community of those who “came up from the ranks”; church community.

Elite and culture. Now we move from structural aspects of elite studies to the ideological aspect. In one of his papers, Andrej Kazakievič makes an attempt to describe elite not as a structure but as a cultural phenomenon – in the context of geopolitical apprehension of Belarusian identity (Kazakievič, 2006). In this text, the author writes rather about subcultures (directions in thinking, strategies of apprehension of external context of Belarus) than age, gender or other compositions. In Kazakievič’s opinion, the main division in the structure of the Belarusian elite at present does not come in accordance with functional criteria, but through the axis “authorities – opposition”, which involves more fundamental division on the level of culture and values. The author believes that the availability of different subcultures is conditioned by the structure of biographies, education, social set-up, cultural background, position in political field, corporate relations and others. Thus,

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Kazakievič singles out four groups of the Belarusian elite in accordance with the outlook they share. Firstly, this is the Belarusian post-Soviet elite that is grounded into the context of the Belarusian Soviet culture and the corresponding identity. For them, Europe and Russia have rather territorial than civilizational measurement. At all this, this type of elite has a positive attitude towards Europe. As the counterbalance, the national elite comes first. For them, Europe is the symbol of national renascence, the image of true (not Soviet) Belarus and the concept of "coming back to Europe" is regarded as an alternative of Sovietness.

The next group, according to Kazakievič's analysis of interviews with representatives of the Belarusian elite, is the so-called "new elite" (the present-day ruling elite that is characterized by an anti-West rhetoric and that in the 1990s partially kept to Russian nationalism).

Currently, the main conceptual frame of this type of elite is the ideology of the Belarusian state in which Europe regains geographical understanding, and Belarus is viewed as the geographical center of Europe. The last group, the young generation, is – in Kazakievič's opinion – eclectic, fragmented. It comprehends the basic forms of identity of the existing groups. Such identity, in the opinion of another author Vitaĺ Silicki (Silicki, 2006) is based on two questions: "who are we?", the question to find out what makes Belarusian people Belarusians as well as the question "where are we?", in the context of a civilized choice. The researcher points out that there is no unity in answering these questions in the Belarusian elite field. There exist different visions and concepts of Europe, Belarus, Slavic community which leads to disruptiveness of elites.

Elite in the system. Another type of research of the Belarusian elite is its study as a structural element of the whole political system (Antanovič, 2001, Kazakievič, 2004). Nina Antanovič shares the opinion that it is the study of the role of bureaucracy as an independent player in political system that will enable to define the reasons for slipping down to autocracy in 1996. The author singles out two main periods of state administration system development before the 1996 Referendum. The first stage (1991-1994) was carried out in the conditions of parliamentary system, when democratic leadership of the Supreme Soviet was only a "disguise" for nomenclature democracy, on the foundation of which state administration bodies of independent Belarus were established. They included the representatives of party and government machines, the former nomenclature which had a lot of privileges in the Soviet time and in their social status – to old "Komsomol members and young Party members". At that period of time, the establishment of presidential-and-parliamentary system plays a significant role. It is characterized by the appearance of standoff between the president and the parliament. This led to the 1996 constitutional crisis and to the change of the local self-government system and establishment of the top-down command structure in which "Mahilioŭ group" gains its

weight. This grouping made their carriers through personal relations with the president (this is known as patronage-client relations).

According to Antanovič, the key element in the state structure with such a system of organization becomes the administrative-bureaucratic apparatus. This is a very stable and conservative component of the center to make political decisions. Analysing the state authority system, the author notes that it is necessary to proceed from division of bureaucracy into two levels: political (a narrow layer of the highest-level bureaucracy that carries out the political course) and professional (the basic mass of government officials). In this regard, the decision making system in Belarus does not agree with constitutional system. N. Antanovič singles out different levels of decision making: 1) President Administration (about a hundred officials who have up to 90% of state property at their disposal); 2) mid-level officials of the President Administration, Security Council, Committe of State Control, KGB; 3) Council of Ministers, Ministries, state committees; 4) administration bodies. Separately stands a group that is represented by directors of large industrial enterprises, directors of collective farms and deputies of the parliament. The structural distinction of Belarusian political system lies in domination of administrative-distributive relations which are characterized by the phenomenon of "power of property" in which the authority acts as primary, while property is its function. Thus, administrative-bureaucratic apparatus is oriented to centralized redistribution of benefits. This leads to domination of redistributing type of public policy. The state official's ruling functions, including power, field of activity, duties – all these things become the functionary's resource and using this resource he appropriately builds the systems of interaction with the economic and business sphere.

Quite a different approach to analysis of the Belarusian system is proposed by Kazakievič. He also singles out the period of transformation of political system in which the position and role of elites and counter-elites change. The period up to 1999 becomes the first period of development of the system with the revolution of Lukašenka which is marked with gradual distancing of Lukašenka from the nomenclature, expansion towards Russia. Significant importance in such self-description of the system belongs to enemies: up to 2000, it is the period of national renaissance; after 2000, it is liberal reforms carried out.

The second period is the "after revolution" time. This is the 1999-2000 crisis which is characterized with a new strategy of self-preservation instead of expansion. The main enemies for the system are external ones and the main discourse is the discourse if contextualization. The important process which takes place in this period affects the elites as well: it is colonization by the regime of the whole independent space. It is impossible to act beyond the system which leads either to the attempts of counter-elites to integrate into the existing system or to their marginalization. The basic concepts of this period are change of civilization rhetoric from "East-Slavic" to "East-European" and actualization

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of Belarusian identity through the concept of "Belarusian way" and "stability" which become the basic foundation of the Belarusian statesmanship ideology. Describing the political system, Kazakievič singles out the following elements: president as the guarantor of preferences and political positions which were already formed; the state as a corporation in which the regime is concerned rather with discharging "functions" than with "consciousness"; process of concentration of different kinds of capital within the boundary of one "state" field in the result of which each social institution has to fulfill maximum of additional functions; this concerns concentration of the elite as well, which, in Kazakievič's opinion is not differentiated (being political, economic and ideological at the same time).

On the one hand, fulfilling the functions is regarded by the system a significant criteria of efficiency, and on the other, relations of vassalage is of the same importance where loyalty is valued more than efficiency (at the same time, in the system of political discipline namely loyalty and functional efficiency are more valued than ideological commitment and conviction). In the system which functions under the above-described logics, there is no room for the opposition which is associated with such concepts as "disloyalty", "instability", "destructiveness". The enclaves of oppositions still exist, however, for the regime they are not an organic element of the system.

Some conclusions. Thus, in Belarusian political science, the studies of elites are mostly done within the framework of non-official political science. This fact explains primarily analytical study of such research aimed to describe "distribution" of elites in a certain period of time. Most frequently such distribution is given without conceptualization of the word "elite" itself on the basis of intuitive acceptance for elite of those who take these or those positions in governance system (on central and regional levels, in economic sphere and party apparatus), as well as those who have certain economic resources.

Hence, the need to work out the theory of elites corresponding to Belarusian reality has become obvious; however, the conceptualization of elites is not so simple, especially in the conditions of data confidentiality. Kazakievič reasonably points out that "*knowledge about present-day… elites in Belarus is considerably limited because of unavailability of quantitative studies as well as absence of empiric systematized base […]. Most conclusions … have the nature of intuitive evaluations*" (Kazakievič, 2007). Moreover, the researchers focus mainly on examination of administrative elites whereas the studies of counter-elites including those belonging to different than political fields – cultural, religious, social, academic as well as economic – are beyond the scope of their interests. Power is not the only resource the elites fight for and different type of assets can convert into political capital. Thus, even non-political elites can play on the political pitch, be "forwards of opinions" and therefore the researchers should not ignore these processes.

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THE SYMBOLIC AND COMMUNICATIVE DIMENSIONS OF THE LINGUISTIC PRACTICES OF THE BELARUSIAN POLES

Language is traditionally considered as a basic reality connected with such terms as ethnos, ethnicity and nationality. The role and functions of language in forming and determining ethnicity vary a lot in different research traditions and schools. For primordialists, it is a natural basis for the formation of an ethnos, i.e. an "objective" and "natural" characteristic of its bearers. For constructivists, language is an "ethnic marker". In the instrumentalist school, it is viewed as one of the main ethnicity translating channels and so on. But approaches notwithstanding, language is recognized as a major ethnos founding factor and a basis of ethnic identity which also performs a number of realizational functions and axiological connotations.

The contemporary social and humanities studies distinguish between the terms "ethnic identity" and "ethnicity". While ethnic identity is subjective, the term "ethnicity", on the contrary, includes objective features: the ethnic background of parents, place of birth, culture and so on. Ethnicity is a characteristic prescribed or constructed by society, whereas ethnic identity is formed as a result of social reality construction on the basis of ethnicity, but is not equal to it. And "ethnic identity" is considered to be a more plastic term than "ethnicity".

We adhere to the approach according to which ethnic identity is not an unchangeable set of cultural traits but is rather formed in the process of social constructing. Language as a basis and criterion of ethnic identification can be reassessed from the point of view of the functions and role it plays in different ethnic groups. Looking at the role and functions of language in forming the ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles, it is necessary to take into account both the peculiarities of the origin and history of this group and the socio-cultural conditions in present-day Belarus that impact the processes of transformation of its ethnic identity and linguistic practices. In this sense, it is hardly possible to study the state and transformation processes of the linguistic practices of the Belarusian Poles without a reference to the linguistic situation in Belarus, its dynamics and peculiarities.

This article is a result of a study on the community of the Belarusian Poles that was carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences in November-December 2008. Within the framework of the research, we looked at Poles (here and now, i.e. in Belarus and at

[1] Passport spelling: Iryna Lashuk and Aksana Shelest, in Belarusian: Ірына Лашук і Аксана Шэлест

present time) as a symbolic community which shares a basic characteristic – self-identification of individuals as "Poles". And in this respect we were less interested in how this community appeared, was formed and changed over the centuries. The main research focus was placed on the questions of what it means to belong to this community for those who affiliate themselves with it, by means of what social and cultural mechanisms the community is reproduced, and what determines the wholeness and internal diversity of the community.

The empirical part of the research was realised by means of a purposeful selection and survey of adult population of Belarus who identify themselves as belonging to the Polish nationality. The survey was carried out in places "compactly inhabited" by Poles in Hrodna Voblasć (Region), in some towns in Brest, Viciebsk and Minsk Voblasćs which have the biggest populations of Polish nationality, as well as in the City of Minsk. Overall, 787 respondents were surveyed in the framework of the study.

At the initial stage of selecting respondents, the sampling was based on the "snowball" methodology.[2] The methodology of structured interview was used in the survey. The main thematic blocks of the interviews were about images and attitudes towards the Polish culture, history, language and traditions. They also dealt with finding out the criteria of respondents' self-identification with the Belarusian Poles and the extent to which different types of social self-identification are reflected. The other thematic blocks were about religious and communicative practices. One of the study's objectives was to identify the symbolic role and place of language in the structure of the ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles. The study also aimed at analysing the real linguistic practices and communicative environments as factors in preserving and transforming the community of the Belarusian Poles.

Linguistic Situation in Belarus as a Factor in the Transformation of Communicative Practices of the Belarusian Poles

For centuries, the linguistic situation in Belarus has been characterized by the coexistence of different languages. Moreover, it was not only the prevalence and state of the languages that changed in different historical periods, but their status as well.[3] Only in the past two decades, the legislative embodi-

[2] The *snowball* methodology is used to find respondents who are difficult to reach. The selection of respondents is done in the following way: initially, a group of qualifying respondents is formed; then during the interviews they are asked for other potential respondents (acquaintances, relatives, friends and partners of Polish nationality in our case) who are later also interviewed. Then the procedure goes on: the addresses of a third wave of respondents are found out and so on. The sampling is built gradually, stage after stage like in making snowballs.

[3] For a detailed account of the linguistic situation in Belarus in different periods see: Bulyka, A. N., Krysin, L. P.. (eds) (1999); Citarenka, L. H. (2009).

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ment of the state language changed twice in Belarus. The most sensitive and topical issues in the linguistic sphere today have to do with the relationship and state of the Russian and Belarusian languages.

To describe the linguistic situation in communicative spaces in which there are two or more languages at the same time, an extensive categorical apparatus has been formed in social sciences and humanities (first and foremost in sociolinguistics). In the context of analysis of the language situation in Belarus, we are mostly interested in the concepts of bilingualism, multilingualism and diglossia. During their existence, these concepts have undergone significant changes, which in some sense reflect the overall change of linguistic processes in the world, but this is not the subject of our research.

The concept of diglossia was introduced into the scientific vocabulary by Charles Ferguson (Ferguson, 1959) in 1959 to determine the specific relationship between two or more versions of the same language which are used in a communication community. The most important feature of diglossia is the functional specialization of options when depending on the social situation, the individual uses various functional styles of one language or different languages. In his work (Ferguson, 1959), Ferguson points out the functional difference between diglossia and bilingualism. While in bilingualism the languages are functionally equal, in the case of diglossia there is a division into High and Low languages. The High language is used in non-domestic "high" (religion, book-writing culture, science, education) areas and communicative situations and is not used in everyday life. The Low language is used in daily communication and lower functional speech styles and genres of writing (home writing, "low" genres of literature). Later, the term diglossia began to be used for the study of multilingual communities.

Thus, the main difference of diglossia from multilingualism and bilingualism is that it has a social organization, where each of the languages has its own clearly defined, phenomenologically sanctioned and widely recognized functions.

Justyna Straczuk (Straczuk, 1999), who used the concept of diglossia to describe the linguistic situation in the Belarusian-Polish border area, notes that a clear separation of the functions of the languages is very important in the case of diglossia. One language is typical of the official sphere and religious life and is used to communicate with strangers and colleagues at work. The other is used in private, family and everyday communication. Without a separation of the functions of individual languages, diglossia disappears; because if in some area of life two languages are used, the language that enjoys greater prestige sooner or later prevails. This kind of separation, however, requires a wholeness of cultural organization. Therefore, diglossia is most common in the world of traditional culture, as in the modern world the boundaries between different spheres of life are increasingly blurred. In multilingual communities, the choice of the language to be used in a particular situation is not accidental. It is the community that establishes the usage zones of individual

languages and gives them some value – the status of low or high, intimate or formal language. Each member of a multilingual community learns from early childhood not just several languages, but also the principles of their use in specific situations. This requires communicative competence, i.e. knowledge of the rules of how to use different languages depending on a social context (Straczuk, 1999:10-18).

It should be pointed out that such functionalization of linguistic relations can serve the purposes of social adjustment in a foreign language environment while preserving the language of an ethnic group by distinguishing and fixing the specific areas of its use.

Applying the concept of diglossia to describe the linguistic situation in Belarus, we can identify the specific dynamics of its development, especially in recent years. Let us note some contextual characteristics that influence the pace and content of this dynamics. The first important characteristic of the linguistic situation in Belarus is its quite intensive (and almost uninterrupted for the last centuries) development and a "becoming" nature. The second characteristic is that there are two legally equal languages: Russian and Belarusian. The third characteristic has to do not so much with objectively set but rather subjectively shared aspects. It is the high degree of the ideological coloration of individual or different social groups' attitudes to various aspects of the linguistic situation in Belarus.

So, let us consider the linguistic situation in Belarus in terms of diglossia. The situation of diglossia, apart from the limited and socially determined difference in how languages are used in various social situations, also foresees different channels to transmit languages. The Low language is the language of family, neighbourhood, closest surrounding and is the first one to be learnt in the process of socialization. The High language is predominantly transmitted via special social institutes (school and, possibly, church). Some researchers consider Belarus as a classic example of diglossia. They refer to the widespread use of "trasianka" as the language of everyday communication (according to the classical definitions of diglossia – a Low language) and the consolidation of the standardized Russian and Belarusian languages as High languages used in the official discourse, media, literature, etc. In general, this approach to the linguistic situation in Belarus could be accepted. But a more detailed analysis shows that this "diglossia" breaks down into a number of other "diglossias", which can be important within different socio-cultural groups and in their interaction.

This primarily concerns the situation of the existence of the two state languages, Russian and Belarusian. Despite the fact that the Russian and Belarusian languages have equal formal and legal statuses, they differ a lot in terms of the spheres and intensity of use. We will not analyse individual linguistic practices here, but will only note that Belarusian is now almost entirely excluded from official proceedings (including legal proceedings), science and education (it is studied as one of the subjects, but education in

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Belarusian is becoming less common in high schools and universities). Thus, the major channels of High language (nationwide) transmit Russian. Even if the recently announced government policies to extend the use of the Belarusian language are implemented, rapid and large-scale changes can hardly be expected.

At the same time, for some social and cultural groups – primarily, the representatives of the movement for national rebirth, political opposition and cultural underground – Belarusian is the High language. Russian is rejected by them on ideological, cultural and historical and aesthetic grounds. Throughout the whole period of the sovereign development of Belarus, there has been explicit confrontation on the issue of the national language and only recently its radicalism started to subside. An additional demarcation line has to do with the existence of different variants of the Belarusian language which are recognized by different social actors. These variants are "taraškievica" and "narkamaŭka"[4] and each of them can perform the role of the High language for different social groups.

The widespread use of local dialects ("trasianka") has also started to be comprehended and reassessed in the Belarusian culture. "Trasianka" is becoming an object of research and cultural stylization while its cultural role and functions are being reassessed, which entails a change of "marking" in the symbolic status: from a "semi-literate", domestic language with low social prestige to a "live language" which preserves the "secrets of Belarusianism".[5]

[4] Several variants of literary writing in Belarusian are used today. The one that is studied in schools and universities is based on the rules established in 1957 by a Decree of the Council of Ministers of the BSSR. This Decree amended the rules established in 1933 by a Decree of the Sovnarkom of the BSSR, which, in its turn, nullified the norms of the Belarusian Grammar for Schools published in 1918 in Viĺnia by B. Taraškievič. But in those days the Soviet rule was in effect not on all the Belarusian territories and the population of the territories where it was not - continued to use the grammar by B. Taraškievič. The variant that was adopted by the Decree of the Sovnarkom was dubbed "narkamaŭka" by its opponents and their own – "taraškievica". In the 1980s, with the beginning of the renaissance of the Belarusian culture in the BSSR, underground and oppositional publishers started to use "taraškievica". Since that time different groups of experts have worked "in parallel" to reform these two variants of the literary Belarusian language. In 1993, the Council of Ministers set up the State Commission on Revising the Writing headed by Nil Hilievič, but it was dissolved just a year later. The Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Education were ordered to "prepare for publication, until the end of 1995, a new edition of the 'Rules of the Belarusian Orthography and Punctuation' with applying the rules of the orthoepy". In 2003, a group of scholars at the Institute of Linguistics of the National Academy of Sciences headed by its director Aliaksandr Padlužny finalized a draft. It was not published and officially approved and stayed only within the expert community. But some of its elements started to be used by a pro-government newspaper – "Zviazda". Work on draft amendments continued and The New Rules of Orthography and Punctuation were introduced on 1 September 2010. At the same time, the representatives of civil society widely discussed ways to modernize "taraškievica" and in 2005 a working group made up of Juraś Bušliakoŭ, Vincuk Viačorka, Zmicier Sańko and Zmicier Saŭka presented the book "Belarusian Classical Writing: Collection of Rules: Modern normalization". This variant started to be used by the newspaper *Naša Niva*, journal "Arche", Belarusian service of the "Radio Liberty" and some other mass media.

[5] One of the best examples of cultural stylization in this sense is the project *People's Album*. And

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Another functional sphere of the High language in different societies and cultures is religion. And even in this sphere, which is one of the most conservative in terms of social and linguistic dynamics, Belarus is at a transformational stage. Belarus is a multi-confessional country with a domination of Christian beliefs: Orthodoxy, Catholicism and various branches of Protestantism. In parallel to the changes of the levels and characteristics of the religiosity of Belarusian citizens, changes of the linguistic aspects of the religious practices of different churches have lately taken place. The Orthodox Church is most "sustainable" against the influence of time. The absolute majority of services in the Orthodox Church (which the majority of Belarusians affiliate themselves with) is in the Old Slavic language which can be considered as the High language for this confession (the sphere of its use is strictly limited to clergy training and church services). Until recently, the Catholic Church was an institute where Polish was transmitted as the High language for the Belarusian Catholics. But in recent years, services in Catholic Churches have mostly switched over to Belarusian, though part of them are still in Polish and Latin. Considering the fact that conducting cult practices in national languages is a general trend of the internal policies of the Catholic Church, it can be expected that the Polish language will be more and more forced out of this sphere. Protestant Churches predominantly use Russian or Belarusian as the languages of service and religious communication.[6]

Thus, the linguistic situation in Belarus differs not only by the objectively observed diversity of languages and dialects but also by the differentiation of various social groups and subjects on the basis of their attitude to the linguistic issue. For the majority of the population, the attitude to the linguistic processes in Belarus and individual motivation for using a language are determined by practical reasons. And in the present situation, their choices are almost automatically in favour of Russian (according to the 2009 census, about 70% of the population of Belarus named Russian as their main home language).[7] But for some social groups, the issue of the status and use of a language is determined by pragmatism of a different sort. It is the confrontation and communication between these groups that form the problem field in which the linguistic issue becomes one of the aspects of a solution to the problem of self-identification of Belarus as an independent state, formation of the Belarusian nation and the geopolitical choice of Belarus.

We deal with the characteristics of socio-political and cultural aspects of the linguistic situation in Belarus so thoroughly (though, the description

one of the best recent materials on this topic is the discussion "Trasianka: a border area between cultures or hidden Belarusianism?" held by the expert community *Nashe Mnenie (Babkoŭ et al., 2010).*

[6] However paradoxical it might sound, but the only socio-cultural groups for which Belarusian is institutionally recognized as the High language – in the terminology of diglossia – are Belarusian Catholics and Protestants of certain branches.

[7] The National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus. Census 2009. Table 5.9. Population according to the nationality and language spoken at home. URL (Accessed 14.02.2011) http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/perepic/2009/vihod_tables/5.9-0.pdf

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here is, of course, quite lapidary and one has to write a whole book to systematically review this situation) in order to identify the field in which the linguistic practices of the Belarusian Poles as an ethnic group originate and transform. Being inhabitants and citizens of Belarus, the Belarusian Poles are part of the historical processes of socio-political changes, which also impacts the process of transformation of the basics and contents of the ethnic identity.

Analysing the linguistic practices of the Belarusian Poles, different angles of the problem have to be taken into account: the current state and development prospects of these practices, the symbolic and axiological role of a language as a component of ethnic identity and the functional specialization of using different languages.

The Choice of the Mother Tongue as a Basis for Differentiating the Community of the Belarusian Poles

It is the mother tongue that is traditionally considered as the most powerful factor influencing and forming ethnic self-identification. But it should be noted that the term "mother tongue" itself has quite a number of meanings. At least three most widespread definitions can be singled out. Firstly, it is the mother tongue as the language of ethnic self-identification (the language of an ethnic/national community which a person affiliates him-/herself with and that connects the person with the ancestors and their culture and history). Secondly, it is the mother tongue as the language learnt in childhood (which a person learns in early childhood without any special education, just being in a language environment). Thirdly, it is the mother tongue as the first language functionally (which a person thinks in without any additional self-control and in which he/she easily expresses thoughts orally or in writing).

However, these are theoretical definitions used in the scientific language where they are all the time specified. The spectrum of meanings in which common people use the term "mother tongue" is significantly wider. We assume that for the Belarusian Poles who took part in the study, the choice of the mother tongue is based not so much on ascriptive factors and characteristics, but is rather a conscious choice which to a different extent reflects the socio-cultural identification of the respondents. Nonetheless, the answer to this question can depend on various conditions and attitudes. It can be assumed that the choice of a particular language as the mother tongue (in the case of the study) can be based on:

1. Ethnic identification (if one is a Pole by nationality, then Polish is his/her mother tongue);
2. The first language learnt in childhood;

3. Family tradition (the family considers ... as the mother tongue) or communicative practices in the family (the family speak ...);
4. Functionally the first language (it is easier to talk and think in …) or real language practice (mainly speak …);
5. Socio-cultural choice (conscious affiliation with a certain culture and tradition and in this sense – with a language, the real linguistic practice notwithstanding).

The data gathered during the survey does not allow to identify for sure what exactly the respondents' choice is based on in each particular case. We can only deliberate a bit on this topic on basis of the empirical data that can be gathered during the standardized interview.

About a third of the Belarusian Poles chose Belarusian as their mother tongue and almost the same number chose Russian (Table 1). The "Polish speaking" group is almost two times smaller than the two aforementioned – only 17,7% name Polish as their mother tongue. The groups that chose "other" or "difficult to say" responses, despite being small, are of particular interest. As our analysis has shown, "trasianka" or language combinations (Belarusian and Polish, Russian and Polish) are mostly named as "other" language. The group of those who were unable to unequivocally choose the mother tongue is interesting in the sense that such "difficulties of choice" can be evidence of a reflective attitude to determining the mother tongue in the conditions of "bordering" national and ethnic identity (however, it can as well be caused by totally opposite reasons – lack of significance and comprehension of this question).

Table 1

Choice of the mother tongue[8]

What language do you consider as your mother tongue?	*Number*	*%*
Belarusian	252	32,2
Polish	138	17,7
Russian	269	34,4
Other	52	6,7
Difficult to say	70	9,0
Total	781	100,0

[8] Here and throughout the text percentage is calculated out of the number of the responses.

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Let us compare the data from the study and the information acquired during the census (Table 2). According to the latest census (2009), the share of the Poles who chose Polish as their mother tongue is significantly smaller than what our study revealed. The results of the census also differ considerably from the previous studies. We can assume, with a big degree of certainty, that this is due to the wording of the question in the census list 2009 which specifies the term "mother tongue" as the language learnt first in early childhood. This definition had essentially influenced the results (the change is noticed in relation not only to Polish but also to Belarusian). At the same time, the data from 1999, when the question about the mother tongue was asked without additional interpretation, is similar to the data we acquired during the sociological study.

Table 2

Dynamics of the number of the Belarusian Poles and their choices of the mother tongue (according to the censuses)

Year of census	*1979*	*1989*	*1999*	*2009*
Number of population (in thousands)	9532	10152	10045	9504
Number of Poles (in thousands)	403	418	396	295
Share of Poles in the overall population	4,2%	4,1%	3,9%	3,1%
Share of Poles who named Polish as their mother tongue	7,8%	13,3%	16,5%	5,4%
Share of Poles who named Belarusian as their mother tongue	74,0%	63,9%	67,1%	58,2%
Share of Poles who named Russian as their mother tongue	18,1%	22,6%	16,2%	33,9%

Source:

Data from 1979, 1989 and 1999 are given according to the Ministry of Statistics and Analysis of the Republic of Belarus (2001).

Data from 2009 – The National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus. Census 2009. Table 5.8. population according to national and mother tongues. URL (accessed 14.02.2011) http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/perepic/2009/vihod_tables/5.8-0.pdf

We will try to analyse a connection between the choice of the mother tongue and real communicative practices. Taking into consideration the diversity of the communicative practices of the Belarusian Poles, the study fixed the predominant use of a particular language in different communicative spheres: at home and work, among friends and in public places. Besides, it

was separately fixed in what language a respondent "most often thinks". This gives an idea about the "closest", "naturally spoken" or, to use the regular terminology, "functionally the first" language.

Based on the idea about the language that a person "thinks in" as the most "natural" for this person, it should be noted that the choice of the mother tongue is related to this type of linguistic practice in a contradictory way. While for the respondents who named Russian as their mother tongue in the majority of cases it is also Russian that is most natural in use, the choice of Polish and Belarusian as mother tongues is not based on a clear link (Table 3). Among those who chose Belarusian as the mother tongue, only slightly more than a half (58,3%) of the respondents name Belarusian as "functionally the first" language . For the Polish language, the extent of the "internal harmony" of its "adepts" is even smaller (38,4%). A conclusion about inequalities in the criteria of choosing the mother tongue in different groups lies on the surface. While for the Belarusian Poles who choose Russian as their mother tongue the choice is likely connected with the use of the language in real linguistic practices (or, at least, does not contradict it), the choice of Belarusian or Polish evidently has a wider spectrum of motivations.

Table 3

Connection between the languages that a respondent chooses as functionally the first and the mother tongue (%)

What language do you most often think in?	*What language do you consider as your mother tongue?*				
	Belarusian	Polish	Russian	Other	Difficult to say
Belarusian	58,3	11,6	0,7	13,5	8,8
Polish	4,4	38,4	2,2	11,5	4,4
Russian	32,9	44,9	96,7	53,8	86,8
Other	4,4	5,1	0,4	21,2	0

It can be assumed that the choice of Polish as the mother tongue is to a considerable extent connected with its significance for the respondents as a factor which unites the ethnic group and gives a feeling of individual affiliation with the group. This is also supported by the analysis of the responses to the question "What unites you individually with the people of your nationality?" The respondents were asked to assess "the commonality of language" as one of the uniting factors. For those who named Polish as the mother tongue, the intensity of this factor is next to maximal (Table 4).

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Table 4

Significance of language commonality as a uniting feature and intensity of Belarusian self-identification among the representatives of “multilingual” groups

What language do you consider as your mother tongue?	*What unites you with the people of your nationality – option “language commonality”* [8]	*To what extent do the following words describe you – option “Belarusian”* [9]
Belarusian	3,6	0,47
Polish	4,49	0,07
Russian	3,34	0,23

As to the choice of Belarusian as the mother tongue, it is relevant to recall the processes of assimilation that are characteristic of the Belarusian-Polish border area. Iwona Kabzińska (Kabzińska, 1999) considers the linguistic assimilation among the Belarusian Poles as the beginning of assimilation in other directions, including national (Kabzińska, 1999:53). It is difficult to unequivocally say what is of primary and secondary role in this case. But the data from the study shows that the intensity of self-identification as Belarusian among the Belarusian Poles who named Belarusian as their mother tongue is significantly higher than in the other groups (Table 4).

There is no doubt that none of the aforementioned factors solely determines this or that choice of mother tongue. In each individual case this choice can be made non-reflectively and based on this or that “objective” or phenomenal preconditions. Or, it can result from a complex contamination of objective factors and subjective guidelines. For now we can only note that the choice of the mother tongue demonstrates the diversity of the community of the Belarusian Poles and make an assumption that this choice is connected with other aspects of ethnic identity and real social and cultural practices in which it is realized.

An essential aspect of language analysis as a factor of ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles, which allows not only to fix the existing condition but

[9] A 5-point scale was used in the question, where 1 stands for “does not unite at all” and 5 – “unites to a maximal extent”. Average results in each group are presented in the table.

[10] The indexes of contrast are presented in the table for the named groups. The index of contrast for this question was calculated according to the formula: (a+0,5*b-0,5*c-d+0*e)/N, where: a – number of those who responded “This is exactly about me” to the question “To what extent do the following words describe you?”, b – number of those who responded “This is almost about me”, c – number of those who responded “This is rather about me”, d – number of those who responded “This is not at all about me”, e – number of those who found it difficult to respond, N – sampling volume (or sub-sampling). The values of the index are within the limits [-1;1].

also assess the prospects for transformation, is the analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the groups that differ according to the choice of the mother tongue.

Analysing these characteristics, the statistically essential differences are fixed along such characteristics as education, age and place of residence. To make it easier for perception, we will be using the terms “Polish speaking”, “Russian speaking” etc. meaning the choice of the mother tongue and not linguistic practices.

The group of the surveyed who chose Polish as the mother tongue have a higher level of education compared to the others. The least educated are those who chose Belarusian as the mother tongue. The “Russian speakers” more often than the others have vocational education.

The analysis of the places of residence reveals that those who named Russian as the mother tongue are mainly city dwellers (73,6%). Among those who consider Belarusian and Polish as the mother tongue more than 40% live in rural areas. In other words, we observe certain specificity connected with the type of the place of residence.

According to the age characteristics, the group that chose Polish as the mother tongue is older than the rest of the groups. The “Russian speakers” make up the youngest group (Table 5).

Table 5

Average age of the groups that chose different languages as mother tongues

What language do you consider as your mother tongue?	*Average age*
Belarusian	42,36
Polish	47,52
Russian	35,02
Other	42,38
Difficult to say	37,34

Thus, the groups of the Belarusian Poles who made a symbolic choice of the mother tongue in favour of Polish and Belarusian are quite close in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics, excluding the level of education (roughly speaking, it is the “older generation” of the Belarusian Poles, who reside mainly in rural areas, the more educated part of which identifies Polish as the mother tongue and the less educated part choose Belarusian). Those who chose Russian as the mother tongue represent the younger urban generation. These nominations are quite conditional (the young urban dwellers have “Polish and Belarusian speakers” and among the senior rural population

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there are those who consider Russian as their mother tongue). However, they can be meaningful for making forecast of the dynamics of the linguistic processes in the community of the Belarusian Poles.

Let us try to analyse how the choice of the mother tongue is related to the other signs of belonging to an ethnic community.

The "Polish speaking" respondents demonstrate the highest interest to the history of Poland. The lowest interest to this topic was demonstrated by those who chose Russian as the mother tongue and those who found it difficult to answer (Table 6).

Table 6

Level of interest to the history of Poland (%)

Are you interested in the history of Poland?	*What language do you consider as your mother tongue?*				
	Belarusian	Polish	Russian	Other	Difficult to say
Yes	17,7	45,3	12,4	16,0	10,6
Rather yes	37,3	42,3	29,3	38,0	31,8
Rather no	37,8	8,8	44,4	38,0	40,9
No	7,2	3,6	13,9	8,0	16,7

The choice of the mother tongue is closely connected with the respondents' feeling of affiliation with the Poles who live on the territory of Belarus. Thus, those who chose Polish as their mother tongue demonstrate a higher level of subjective comprehension of their inclusion into the community of the Belarusian Poles. The least included are the "Russian speakers" and those who found it difficult to respond (Table 7).

Table 7

Level of perception of affiliation with the Poles who reside on the territory of Belarus (%)

Do you feel unity or commonality with the Poles who reside in Belarus?	*What language do you consider as your mother tongue?*				
	Belarusian	Polish	Russian	Other	Difficult to say
Yes	26,2	58,7	28,6	26,0	14,3
Rather yes	36,5	23,2	25,7	26,0	20,0
Rather no	20,6	15,2	29,7	32,0	42,9
No	4,0	0,7	11,9	10,0	11,4
Difficult to say	12,7	2,2	4,1	6,0	11,4

The "Polish speakers" also have broader family and friendly relations with the Poles who live in Poland (Table 8). It should also be noted that they sustain these relations considerably more often, i.e. meet with friends and relatives who live in Poland.

Table 8

Existence of relatives and friends who live in Poland (%)

Do you have friends and relatives who live in Poland?	*What language do you consider as your mother tongue?*				
	Belarusian	Polish	Russian	Other	Difficult to say
Yes	71,8	90,6	68,4	82,7	47,1
No	28,2	9,4	31,6	17,3	52,9

Thus, the respondents who named Polish as their mother tongue demonstrate a greater degree of inclusion into the community of the Belarusian Poles as well as closer relations with the Poles who live in Poland. It can be said that this group is to the biggest extent included in the Polish culture and, potentially, can consolidate and transmit the values of this culture on the territory of Belarus. It is even more so since this group more than any other thinks that it is necessary to bring up children in the framework of the national culture. This is reflected on the levels of guidelines and activities, i.e. they more actively participate in the work of various national and cultural public associations.

Those who found it difficult to choose the mother tongue have connections with the Poles living in Poland less than the others. The "Russian speakers" – even those who have some contacts – keep in touch with them significantly more rarely. However, the desire to have an opportunity to travel to Poland more often is clearly expressed among the "Russian speakers". But it is difficult to say for sure how this is related to the aspiration to become part of the Polish culture and values.

Statistically important differences between the groups regarding their attitude to Belarus were also discovered. Here we differentiate between two moments: attitude to the Belarusian citizenship and to Belarus as a country of residence. Thus, it is mostly those who chose Belarusian and Russian as their mother tongues who take pride in their Belarusian citizenship (Table 9). The least positive attitude to the Belarusian citizenship is shown by those who chose "It is difficult to say" (from the point of view of the socio-demographic characteristics, these people are quite well-educated and mostly urban residents; the average age of the group is 37). We have neither noticed a high level of inclusion among this group with regards to Polish culture.

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Table 9

Attitude to the Belarusian citizenship among different groups (%)

I am proud to be a citizen of Belarus	*What language do you consider as your mother tongue?*				
	Belarusian	Polish	Russian	Other	Difficult to say
1 – absolutely disagree	0,8	3,7	6,0	--	--
2	5,9	9,0	5,3	2,9	23,5
3	15,6	23,1	24,1	11,4	32,4
4	32,1	33,6	26,6	51,4	29,4
5 – absolutely agree	45,6	30,6	38,0	34,3	14,7

We can note the same peculiarity in relation to Belarus as the country of residence. It is mostly those who chose Belarusian and Russian as the mother tongues who take pride in the country they live in. Respectively, those who chose the option "difficult to say" are "excluded".

Thus, it is the "Polish speakers" who are most included in the Polish culture and community, and the "Russian speakers" who are the least included. The "Belarusian speakers" are, on the one hand, quite strongly involved in the Polish community, but at the same time more than the others take pride in their citizenship. The "Russian speakers" show a high level of attachment and pride of Belarus and simultaneously are quite excluded from the "Polishness". A specific group is made up of the Belarusian Poles who could not make a choice regarding their mother tongue since they least of all comprehend both their inclusion in the community of the Belarusian Poles and attachment to Belarus. It can be suggested that quite an indifferent (or critical) attitude to its own ethnic, civil and territorial affiliation is characteristic of this group.

Another interesting aspect of the differences in the groups' perceptions against the criteria of choosing the mother tongue has to do with the assessment of Belarusian and Polish cultures. Although the absolute majority of the Belarusian Poles mention closeness between Belarusian and Polish cultures,[11] the assessment of the extent of such closeness differs. Most intensively it is felt by those who name Polish as the mother tongue, whereas the "Russian speaking" Poles are more critical of this closeness. It is only the undecided ones in their mother tongue who consider these two cultures more separated from

[11] It is interesting what Belarusians would say regarding the closeness of Belarusian and Polish cultures.

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each other (Table 10). One of the indirect factors here is the type of settlement – urban dwellers (who, as we remember, dominate among the "Russian speakers" and the "undecided"), living in conditions of larger cultural and habitual diversity, have more chances to compare and reasons to reflect on cultural differences than the rural population.

Table 10

Assessment of the closeness between Belarusian and Polish cultures (%)

How close do you think Belarusian and Polish cultures are?	*What language do you consider as your mother tongue?*				
	Belarusian	Polish	Russian	Other	Difficult to say
Very close	30,0	44,7	24,6	25,0	17,1
Quite close	62,3	44,5	62,3	65,4	58,6
Quite remote	3,7	3,6	4,5	3,8	10,0
They are completely different and have nothing in common	1,6	3,6	4,1	0	2,9
Difficult to say	2,4	3,6	4,5	5,8	11,4

Thus, the community of the Belarusian Poles is essentially differentiated – both in terms of choice of the native language and correlation of this choice with other aspects of ethnic identity. It can be said with a high degree of certainty that the Polish language is not the core factor in the formation of ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles. The evidence of this is the comparatively low share of the Belarusian Poles who chose Polish as their mother tongue as well as the low significance of language commonalities as a ground for ethnic and national self-identification. Furthermore, the socio-demographic characteristics of the group that chooses Polish at least on a symbolic level show that this group is prone to be decreasing. On the one hand, this is because of the natural loss and, on the other, is a result of the migration processes. These tendencies were noticed before. Iwona Kabzińska (Kabzińska, 1999) notes that according to her research, the supporters of the statement that "speaking the Polish language makes one Polish" were mostly senior respondents (independent of their own level of command of Polish), while representatives of the younger and middle generations justified their identification with the Polish nationality without the knowledge of the Polish language (Kabzińska, 1999:51).

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3. The Linguistic Practices of the Belarusian Poles: Diglossia and Communicative Environments

The choice of the mother tongue, as is said above, is to a considerable extent a symbolic act which can have different subjective grounds. In the same ambiguous manner, it can be connected with the real linguistic practices, i.e. with the languages people use in different communicative environments. The situation in present day Belarus is characterized by a high degree of mismatch between the choice of the mother tongue and the language spoken in practice. Thus, according to the data of the latest census, 53% of the population named Belarusian as the mother tongue and only 23% defined it as the language spoken at home, i.e. in the most common communicative environment (Table 11).

Table 11

Distribution of the Belarusian and Russian languages in the Republic of Belarus (according to the census 2009, %)

	Choice of the mother tongue		Language usually spoken at home		Another language which is freely spoken	
	Belarusian	Russian	Belarusian	Russian	Belarusian	Russian
All population	53,2	41,5	23,4	70,2	13,5	13,7
Belarusians	60,8	37,0	26,1	69,8	12,7	15,2
Poles	58,2	33,9	40,9	50,9	15,1	24,4

Source: The National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus. Census 2009. Table 5.11. Distribution of the Belarusian and Russian languages at national and regional level. URL (accessed 14.02.2011) http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/perepic/2009/vihod_tables/5.11-0.pdf

The analysis of the data from the study reveals that the use of a language by the Belarusian Poles in different communicative environments is also different in terms of intensity from the characteristics of choosing a certain language as the mother tongue (Table 12).

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Table 12

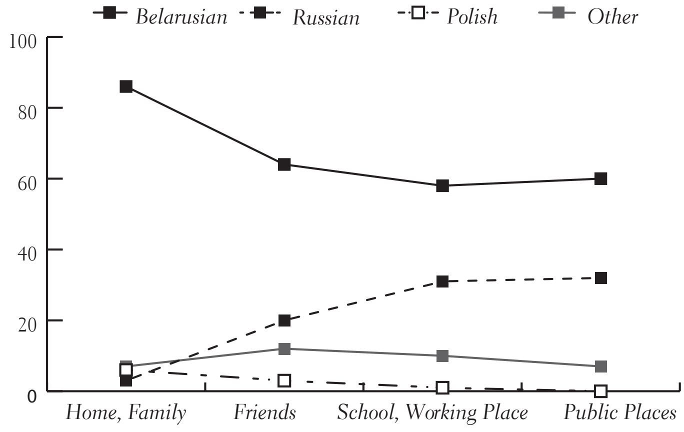
Connection between the use of a language in different communicative environments and the choice of the mother tongue (% according to columns)

In what language do you most often:	*Think*		*Communicate*			
	number	%	In the family, at home (%)	Among friends and acquaintances (%)	At work, school, etc. (%)	In the streets, transport and other public places (%)
Belarusian	180	23,0	22,1	15,6	13,3	15,2
Russian	494	63,1	55,8	64,5	75,3	76,3
Polish	79	10,1	13,0	9,5	4,2	2,6
Other	30	3,8	9,1	10,4	7,2	5,9

Apart from the dominating role of Russian in communicative practices (which is growing as the borders of the communicative environment widen and reaches its maximum in the most "public" and non-free spheres for individual choice – at work, school, in the streets, etc.), the distribution of the answers to these questions shows inequalities in the use of different languages in different communicative environments. Let us analyse the communicative practices in the groups for which different languages are "functionally the first"[12] (graphs 1-3)[13].

Graph 1

The intensity of the use of different languages in the basic communicative environments in the group with Belarusian as functionally the first language (%)

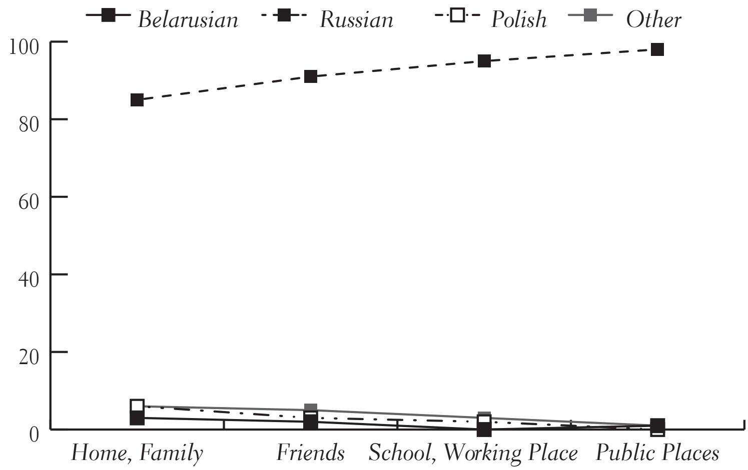


[12] We use this term with certain reservations, as its usual definition is the language in which a person not only thinks in a most natural way, but also expresses thoughts, which cannot be clearly identified using the applied methodology.
[13] Only those who chose Belarusian, Russian and Polish as functionally the first languages will be included in further analysis. This is because the group of those who most often think in a "different language" is too small for analysis.

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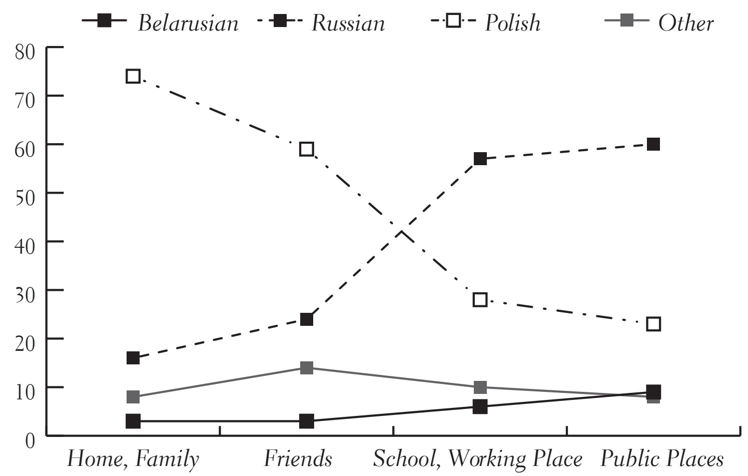
Graph 2

The intensity of the use of different languages in the basic communicative environments in the group with Russian as functionally the first language (%)



Graph 3

The intensity of the use of different languages in the basic communicative environments in the group with Polish as functionally the first language (%)



It is evident that in different communicative environments, on the one hand, Russian and, on the other hand, Belarusian and Polish are used in a "multivectoral" way. Russian "forces" the other two languages out and the more socially standardized a situation is, the more it is expressed.

A clear dependence of the use of a particular language in different communicative environments on the age of the respondents can be tracked (Table 13).

Table 13

Functionally the first language in different age groups (%)

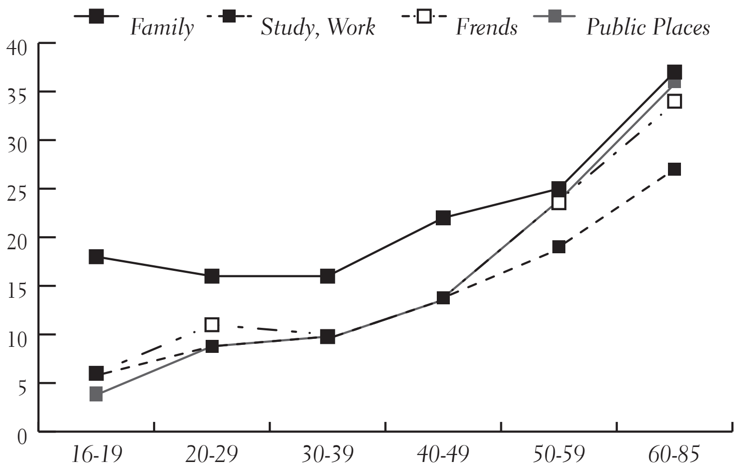
In what language do you think most often?	*Age groups*					
	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-85
Belarusian	14,1	18,2	15,8	25,2	29,5	37,8
Russian	80,0	75,7	73,4	59,1	57,9	29,4
Polish	4,7	5,4	6,3	10,1	8,4	26,9
Other	1,2	0,7	4,5	5,6	4,2	5,9

While in the oldest group the distribution of the three main languages (Belarusian, Russian and Polish) is almost equal, the role of Belarusian and Polish subsides catastrophically with age decreasing. And if Belarusian is functionally the first language for approximately one sixth of the youth (under 30), Polish is used as such by only 4-5% in this age group.

Similar trends can also be observed in practicing a language in different communicative environments: the older the respondents are, the more they use Belarusian and Polish in different communicative environments. At the same time, the young age groups are prone to use predominantly Russian in virtually all socially standardized situations (least of all in families) (Graphs 4 – 6).

Graph 4

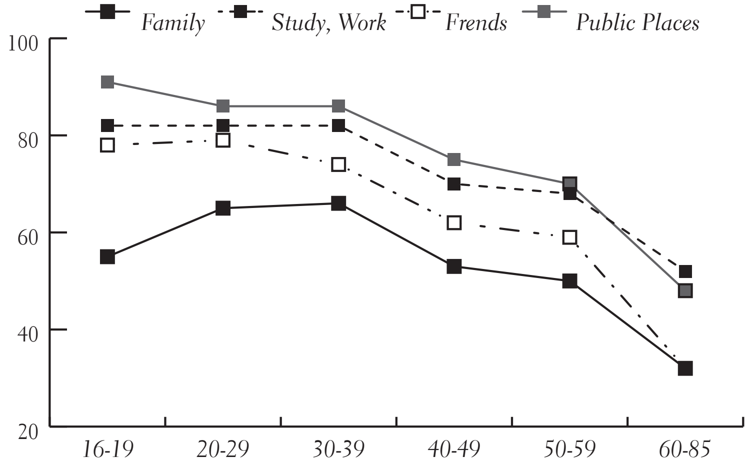
The use of Belarusian in different communicative environments depending on the age of the respondents (%)



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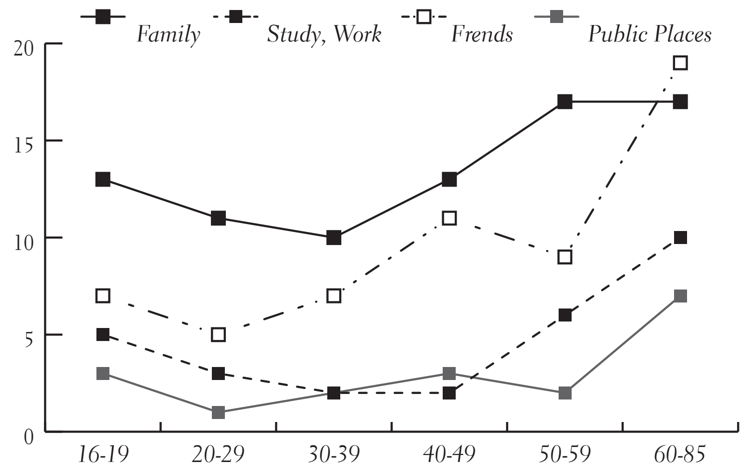
Graph 5

The use of Russian in different communicative environments depending on the age of the respondents (%)



Graph 6

The use of Polish in different communicative environments depending on the age of the respondents (%)

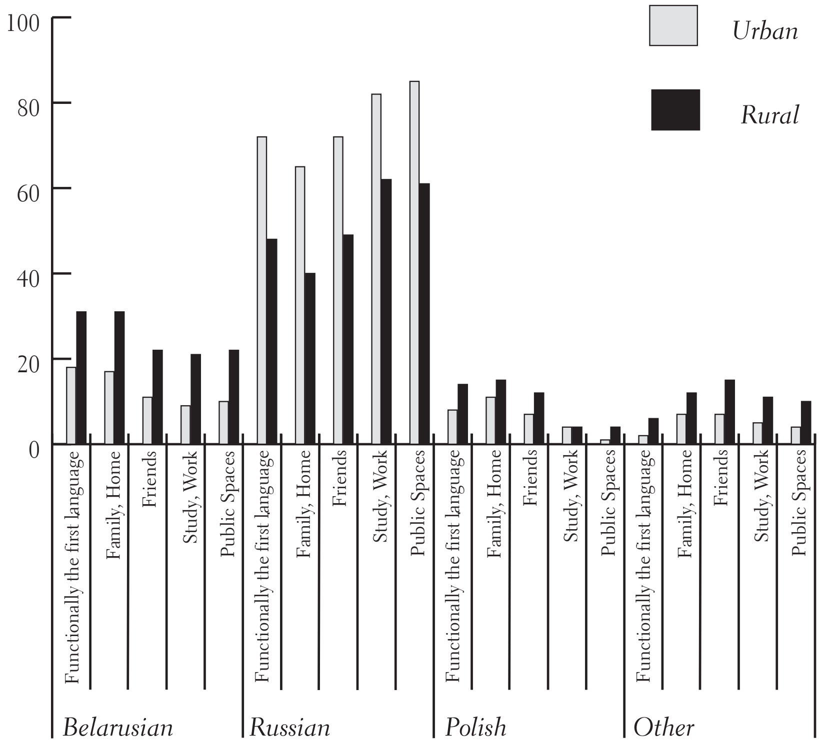


Another socio-demographic factor which in a similar way influences the choice of language in different communicative practices is the type of settlement (Graph 7). Russian is far more intensively used by urban dwellers in all

communicative environments. Furthermore, the same pattern works here – the wider an environment is, the more of the Russian language can be found there. And in rural areas, Belarusian and Polish as well as “other languages” (most often it is the very same “trasianka” or different mixtures of Polish, Russian and Belarusian) are used more actively.

Graph 7

The use of different languages in basic communicative environments depending of the type of settlement (%)



The low level of the use of Polish (as well as Belarusian) is often explained by a low level of its command by the people. But, as the data acquired during our study shows, more than two thirds of the respondents know at least oral Polish on an average or high level (Table 14). Only about 7% of the respondents do not speak Polish at all. The writing skills are somewhat lower: around 60% of the respondents assessed their reading abilities and about 40% evaluated their writing abilities in Polish as being of an average or higher than average level.

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Table 14

The respondents' self-assessment of their knowledge of Polish (%)

Please, assess how well you know Polish:	*speaking*	*reading*	*writing*
Excellent	10,2	9,8	5,6
Good	26,9	23,7	14,9
Average	34,4	25,8	18,5
Lower than average	21,2	26,1	28,4
Do not know at all	7,3	14,6	32,6

It should be noted that age and the type of settlement impact the knowledge of Polish to a considerably lesser extent than its use. Even though the lower the age of the respondents, the worse they speak Polish, — it is not that significant. The difference between urban and rural areas is so small that it can be ignored (Table 15).

Table 15

The level of the knowledge of Polish depending on age and type of settlement[14]

Type of linguistic practice	*Age groups*						*Settlement type*	
	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-85	Urban area	Rural area
Speaking	2,87	3,03	2,91	3,11	3,18	3,52	3,09	3,10
Reading	2,53	2,78	2,64	2,87	3,04	3,26	2,86	2,81
Writing	2,09	2,27	2,11	2,26	2,46	2,71	2,28	2,34

At the same time, there is an obvious trend among the Belarusian Poles of broadening the sphere and enhancing the level of the use of Polish. Thus, almost half of the respondents expressed willingness to use Polish in communication on a more regular basis. About 60% of the surveyed would like to improve their knowledge of Polish. And even though the willingness to broaden the communication opportunities in Polish is to a higher degree

[14] Average points (from 1 – "do not know at all" to 5 – "know excellently") that assess the level of the knowledge of Polish in groups are presented in the Table.

characteristic of the oldest age groups, representatives of all the other groups also express such need. Regarding the willingness to improve the knowledge of Polish, it is most strongly expressed among the young Belarusian Poles (Table 16).

Table 16

Willingness to broaden the sphere of use and improve the level of the knowledge of Polish depending on age (%)

		Age groups					
		16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-85
Would you like to use Polish in communication more often?	Yes	49,4	46,4	46,8	49,7	60,4	62,2
	No	25,9	25,4	24,9	26,4	19,8	22,5
	Difficult to say	24,7	28,2	28,3	23,9	19,8	15,3
Would you like to improve your knowledge of Polish?	Yes	70,5	68,7	64,8	57,6	60,6	42,4
	No	7,1	15,6	19,0	20,9	22,3	35,6
	Don't know	22,4	15,7	16,2	21,5	17,1	22,0

Apart from this, about a half (51,5%) of the representatives of the community of the Belarusian Poles who took part in the survey think that in all the places of residence in Belarus inhabited by Poles there should be an opportunity to get high school education in Polish. Another 20% think that it is enough to provide this opportunity only in the places where Poles make up the majority of the population.

Iwona Kabzińska (Kabzińska, 1999) points out in her study that the fact that many Poles do not speak Polish limits the transfer of the cultural heritage of this group. However, at the same time it stimulates the processes of establishing Polish schools and learning Polish (Kabzińska, 1999:52). It is difficult to say what kind of real power the identified willingness of the Belarusian Poles to broaden the sphere of the use of Polish has. It can possibly be just a sign of respect towards the national language, rather than a real need to learn and practice it. But even on this level, the willingness points at some potential for change of the role and place of the Polish language in the life of the Belarusian Poles and Belarusian culture.

Thus, on the basis of the analysis of the peculiarities of the choice and use of different languages by the respondents, the following characteristics of the linguistic practices of the Belarusian Poles can be distinguished:

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The choice of the mother tongue

1. About a third of the surveyed Belarusian Poles choose Belarusian as their mother tongue, and virtually the same number choose Russian. The "Polish speaking" group is almost two times smaller than each of the aforementioned groups. Only 17,7% name Polish as their mother tongue. A special group is made up of those who chose the answers "other" and "difficult to say". As the analysis reveals, "trasianka" or mixtures of languages (Belarusian and Polish, Russian and Polish) were most often named as "other" languages.
2. Among the socio-demographic peculiarities of the groups that chose a different language as the mother tongue, statistically significant differences were noticed against such characteristics as education, age and type of place of residence. The group of the surveyed who chose Polish as the mother tongue have, compared to the others, the highest level of education. The least educated group turned out to be the one that chose Belarusian as the mother tongue. The "Russian speakers" more often than the others have vocational education. Depending on the type of place of residence, those who chose Russian as their mother tongue are mainly urban dwellers. In the groups of those who consider Belarusian and Polish to be their native languages more than 40% live in rural areas. According to the age characteristics, the group that chose Polish as the mother tongue is older than the others. The youngest group is made up of the "Russian speakers".
3. The analysis of the data shows that the respondents who named Polish as the mother tongue demonstrate both a higher degree of inclusion in the community of the Belarusian Poles and closer contacts with the Poles living in Poland. It can be said that this group is to a larger extent involved in the Polish culture and, potentially, can advance the values of this culture in Belarus.
4. The "Belarusian speakers" are, on the one hand, quite integrated in the community of the Belarusian Poles, and, on the other hand, are to the largest extent attached to Belarus as the country of residence and take pride in their Belarusian citizenship. The "Russian speakers" are highly attached to and proud of Belarus and simultaneously are to a significant extent excluded from the "Polishness".

The linguistic practices of the Belarusian Poles

1. The use of languages by the Belarusian Poles in different communicative environments is determined, inter alia, by the linguistic

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situation in Belarus, which is characterized by a high level of mismatch between the choice of the mother tongue and the really practiced language.

2. A "multivectoral" use of, on the one hand, Russian and, on the other hand, Belarusian and Polish in different communicative situations is seen in the case of the Belarusian Poles. Russian performs the role of the language that "forces" the other two languages out. And the higher the social standardization of a situation, the more expressed this role is.
3. Dependence of the use of a particular language on the age of the respondents can be tracked: the higher the age, the more the respondents use Belarusian and Polish in different communicative environments, while the younger age groups are predominantly prone to use Russian. The Russian language is more intensively used by the urban dwellers, whereas in rural areas Belarusian and Polish are more actively spoken.
4. At the same time, the analysis of the data from the study shows that willingness to broaden the spheres of use and enhance the level of use of the Polish language is quite strongly expressed by the Belarusian Poles.

Concluding the analysis of the role and functions of language in the lives of the Belarusian Poles, we can make notice of the principle diversity of this community in all the dimensions related to the linguistic practices. However, the strongest trend is the continuing "Russification" of the Belarusian Poles (which is within the general framework of the linguistic situation in Belarus). This certainly impacts the processes of the transformation of ethnic identity.

In terms of diglossia, Russian can be seen as a High language, which is used in socially standardized situations – at work, in school and public places. In any way, it plays this role for the Belarusian Poles, for whom it is not functionally the first language. Russian forces the use of Belarusian and Polish out as the borders of the communicative environment widen and the degree of the standardization of a situation rises. The Polish language is mainly transmitted by the older generation of the Belarusian Poles and predominantly by the population of rural areas.

Nonetheless, the Belarusian Poles, independent of age and type of place of residence, preserve quite a strong willingness to broaden the sphere of use of Polish. This is reflected in the desire to use it in communication more often and in the aspiration to enhance their level of command of the language. The willingness by the Belarusian Poles to have more high schools teaching in Polish can be considered as a characteristic of the attitudes to the Polish language. Thus, despite the fact that the role of the national language as the

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basis of the ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles is not high, as well as its presence in the communicative practices, the Belarusian Poles remain willing to preserve and transmit the Polish language, at least on the declarative level.

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THE LEVEL OF WEB ACTIVISM BY CANDIDATES IN THE LOCAL ELECTIONS 2010 (MINSK CITY)[2]

Introduction

THIS STUDY IS AN EXTENSTION TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH on political web activism in Belarus: during the local elections 2007 (Kryvalap, 2007: 56-63) and the parliamentary elections 2008 (Chrapavicki, 2009: 110-120). The web activism during the presidential campaign 2006 was not deeply studied and was briefly referenced in the aforementioned and some other publications (Mieljancoŭ, 2006: 32-41). There are two reasons to explain the scarcity of studies on web activism during electoral campaigns of different levels. Firstly, it is only since 2009 that a significant increase in the number of Internet users in Belarus has been observed. Whereas in 2003, the overall number of Belarusian world web users was 1,391,900 and 2,795,100 in 2007, in the years of 2008 and 2009 it went up to 3,100,700 and 4,436,800 respectively (Electroname.com, 2010).

According to the data of the International Telecommunication Union (2007), out of the then 9,690,000 population there were 6 million Internet users (61.92%). Later it was discovered that these exaggerated numbers resulted from incorrect data provided by the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Belarus. After the mistake was corrected, the Union amended its statistics. This time it stated that there were 2,809,800 Internet users in Belarus, which made up 29% of the population. The CIA resource (The World Factbook, 2008) estimated the number of Belarusian Internet users at 3,100,700 people (57th place in the world). According to Akavita, the Belarusian Internet audience was estimated at around 3.2 million people at the beginning of 2009. A survey conducted at the end of 2009 showed that 41.4% of Belarusians used the Internet (IISEPS, 2009).

The other reason for the scarcity of studies on the Internet is the slow development of the Belarusian Web itself. This was caused by the monopoly of the Bielteliekam (Beltelecom) on the market of services. It controlled all the traffic and its distribution among the other providers, as well as the

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[2] The study was carried out within the framework of the project aimed at supporting the scientific and research activities of the students of the European Humanities University (Vilnius, the Republic of Lithuania). The research was done during the period from July 1 until November 15, 2010.

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prices. Practically, it meant that while the speed was low, the prices were high. In 2009, the pricing policy started to change and the external channel was significantly broadened. Thus, whereas in 2005 the capacity of the internal channel was 465 Mbit/s, in 2006 – 1.8 Gbit/s, in 2007 – 3.1 Gbit/s and in 2008 – 5.2 Gbit/s, in 2009 the external channel already had the capacity of 22 Gbit/s and in the second half of 2010 – 47 Gbit/s (*it.tut.by*, 2010).

Brief Characteristic of the Local Election Campaign 2010

The elections to the Minsk City Council of Deputies were held on 25 April 2010. The early voting took place from 20 till 24 April. The territory of the nine administrative-territorial units of the capital – districts – was divided into 57 constituencies. Zavodski district (rajon) was divided into 7 constituencies, Lieninski – into 7, Kastryčnicki – 6, Maskoŭski – 8, Partyzanski –3, Pieršamajski – 7, Saviecki – 5, Frunzienski – 10 and Centraĺny – 4.

As of 1 April 2010, 221 persons were registered as candidates (Minski Kurjer, 2010). Thus, the competition was 3.88 persons for a deputy place. The minimal number of candidates in a constituency was 2, maximum – 7 (Sucharaŭskaja constituency (akruha) No.30). The average number of candidates in a constituency in Zavodski district was 3.43, in Lieninski – 4, in Kastryčnicki – 4.5, Maskoŭski – 2.63, Partyzanski – 5, Pieršamajski – 3.86, Saviecki – 4, Frunzienski – 4.2 and Centraĺny – 4.75.

The analysis of the quantitative data reveals one trend. In the constituencies with two candidates (there were 6 such constituencies: one in Lieninski and one in Frunzienski districts and 4 in Maskoŭski district) in three cases (constituencies No.13, 23 and 37) top managers of state institutions without party affiliation were running against members of the Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja); in constituency No.24, the chief economist of a department at the "Bielahraprambank") was competing with the 1st Secretary of the Maskoŭski branch of the Belarusian Republican Union of Youth (Bielaruski respublikanski sajuz moladzi) (both with no party affiliation); in constituency No.27 the contenders were again not affiliated with a political party: a chief physician and an employee of a private company at the age of 21. Just in one case – in constituency No.26 – the director of a shopping mall was competing with a representative of the oppositional Belarusian United Left Party "Fair World" (Bielaruskaja partyja lievych "Spraviadlivy sviet").

In the author's opinion, the practice of having "sparring-candidates" who represent the Liberal Democratic Party or have no clear organisational affiliation was used intentionally in order to imitate electoral competition. First, the voters got a certain "alternative" to the pro-governmental candidate. Secondly, the election results in such constituencies were fully legalised (the absence of oppositional candidates a priori eliminated any criticism as the losers did not contend the results).

Overall, the elections were conducted with numerous violations and were not recognised as free and democratic by the OSCE and independent Belarusian observers.

Research Methodology

The objective of this research is to identify the level of web activism during the local elections 2010 in Minsk City. The main aim is to acquire data on the web activism of the candidates and conduct its quantitative analysis. In the future, the study can be combined with other studies on web activism in Belarus for a general evaluation of longitudinal changes in several political campaigns and tracing the progress or stagnation of web activism in Belarus.

The study examines a specific aspect of the problem: to what extent the Internet in Belarus is an applied instrument in political campaigns. For the purpose of the analysis of the web activism during the local elections 2010, we will look at two main functions: 1) the informational support of the candidates and 2) the recruiting of volunteers and mobilisation of human resources for the candidates' campaigns. The methodology of the project is based on the statistical analysis of all the registered candidates in the City of Minsk as of April 1, 2010.[3]

Odnoklassniki.ru, vkontakte.ru, and facebook.com social networks accounts, blogs on *livejournal.com*, *twitter.com* and other similar systems, as well as personal websites are the research items. Websites and blogs (including the twitter.com microblog system) were searched for through the search engine *google.com*. The social networking accounts and *livejournal.com* accounts were searched through these resources' own search engines. The author carried out the content analysis of the candidates' personal websites, blogs, *livejournal* and *twitter* accounts, social networking accounts and information groups. In order to code the information, the following data were collected: first and family name, age (as of April 25, 2010), the constituency in which the candidate was running, party affiliation and NGO membership.

While studying the web activism during a local campaign, I have made several assumptions. Firstly, the collected data do not reflect the level of the web activism in a completely objective way. In particular, social networks have closed profiles impossible to collect information from. Secondly, only "open information" (statuses, wall posts, references to external web-resources, photos, videos and information in thematic groups) can be analysed in the social networks without additional methods (questionnaires, interviewing, etc.). A candidate's communication with potential voters (if it takes place) through messages, chats and emails is "closed information". Within the framework

[3] The candidates who withdrew from the elections due to any reason later than April 1, 2010 were nonetheless considered in the study.

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of this study no additional methods were used and all the data were taken from freely accessible resources.[4] In the majority of cases it was impossible to identify the exact date on which the accounts in the social networks and in *twitter* were registered. Therefore, one should not omit the possibility that some accounts were registered after the elections.

Research Results

odnoklasniki.ru. The web-page *odnoklassniki.ru* was created on March 4, 2006 and is now one of the most popular resources in the Russian language segment of the Internet. The Belarusian audience of this social network at the beginning of 2009 was more than 800,000 people (*marketing.by*, 2010). According to *alexa.com*, *odnoklassniki.ru* is the 12th most popular Internet resource in Belarus.

The candidates were searched for on this resource by entering their first and family names (in Russian)[5] and age (as of April 25, 2010). Among all the candidates registered in Minsk City, 70 were found who had *odnoklassniki.ru* profiles. This makes up 31.67% of the overall number of the registered candidates. After the search was carried out, 16 accounts were found where certain level of web activism could be seen during the elections campaign (or 22.86% out of all the accounts found). In one case,[6] it was impossible to obtain information needed for the research. In another case,[7] it could not be proven that the profile found belonged to the person in question. That is why it was not included into the overall number of the accounts found. Table 9 (see the Appendix) shows the general information with the content analysis of the candidates' *odnoklassniki.ru* accounts.

The content analysis of the accounts where some web activism was noticed has revealed that the candidates predominantly[8] made use of statuses – general information which has to do with the campaign or references to other

[4] When studying the candidates' web activism I adhered to the following principles: information in social networks and blogs was collected not from my own accounts but from accounts created specifically for the study. This measure has become an experiment of a sort in which I performed the role of a potential voter. I think that a candidate had to open his/her account in the social networks in order to improve the chances for the profile to be checked. Moreover, this measure helped to conduct the research in a more objective way since the author is personally acquainted with a number of the candidates.

[5] According to the spelling of the first and family names of the candidates on the website of the Minsk City Executive Committee: http://minsk.gov.by/ru/actual/view/240/sveden_dept.shtml

[6] The closed profile of the candidate Juryj Vaskrasienski (Mašeraŭskaja constituency No. 47).

[7] The profile of the candidate Zajtuna Ivanova (Anharskaja constituency No. 2). The controversy was due to the fact that a person with the same first and family name and age was found through the site's search engine, but the place (either of birth or current residence) of this person is in the Russian Federation.

[8] A candidate could use all or only one form of web activism at his/her account.

personal resources. In the case of the candidate Voĺha Kasatkina (Lošyckaja constituency No. 14), the status appeared only after the elections and informed about her victory, but no web activism was noticed during the campaign. In the case of the candidate Barys Samkovič (Kupalaŭskaja constituency No. 12), the statuses were written in an abusive manner. The next most popular form of web activism was posting biography-related information and, to a lesser extent, photos and wall posts.

Table 1

Forms of web activism of the candidates on odnoklassniki.ru website

Form of web activism	*Number*
Biography-related information	7
Wall posts	1
Statuses and references to other web resources	12
Photos	4

The average age of the candidates who are registered for this social network is 33.23 years. The minimum age is 21 and the maximum – 59. Table 2 shows the age structure of the candidates who have *odnoklassniki.ru* accounts. As can be seen, one third of the candidates are in the age group between 26 and 30 years. The 31+ group is also large. Overall, it makes up 45.71% of all the candidates.

Table 2

Age structure of the candidates who have odnoklassniki.ru accounts

Age	*Number of candidates*	*%*
18-21	1	1.43
22-25	13	18.57
26-30	24	34.29
31-40	15	21.43
41-50	11	15.71
>50	6	8.57

The analysis of the web-activism on *odnoklassniki.ru* reveals that only four of the pro-governmental candidates used this resource for the purposes of their campaigns – Vadzim Kudzin (Viasnianskaja constituency No. 39), Eduard Kuzniacoŭ (Mirašničenkaŭskaja constituency No. 43), Aliaksiej Muzykin (Vasniacoŭskaja constituency No. 5) and Andrej Čysty (Lahojskaja constituency No. 44).

Among the oppositional candidates only five were active on *odnoklassniki.ru* – Tacciana Buraja (Miendzialiejeŭskaja constituency No. 55), Aliaksandr

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Kuŭšynaŭ (Mašeraŭskaja constituency No. 47), Juryj Mieliaškievič (Slabadskaja constituency No. 28), Aliaksandr Šumkievič (Viasnianskaja constituency No. 39) and Dzmitryj Jasievič (Šabanoŭskaja constituency No. 3; later withdrew from the elections).

Among the candidates with no organisational affiliation, web-activism was noticed in the cases of Eduard Amiaĺčuk (Sucharaŭskaja constituency No. 30), Aliena Bandarenka (Lošyckaja constituency No. 14), Tacciana Kuŭšynava (Mašeraŭskaja constituency No. 47), Iryna Ptašnik (Zachodniaja constituency No. 29), Barys Samkovič and Siarhiej Fiedarec (Pliachanaŭskaja constituency No. 10) and Dzmitryj Šaŭcoŭ (Kujbyšaŭskaja constituency No. 46).

vkontakte.ru (vk.com). The website *vkontakte.ru* (the international version is *vk.com*) was founded on October 10, 2006 and is the most popular resource in Russia and Ukraine and the second most popular resource in Belarus (*alexa.com*, 2010). As of March 2010, the Belarusian audience exceeded 1,725,000 people (*rgmedia.by*, 2010).

The candidates were searched for on this resource by entering their first and family names (in Russian and Belarusian) and age (as of April 25, 2010) into the site's search engine. 47 accounts of the candidates were found, which made up 21.27% out of the overall number of the registered candidates. Web activism was noticed in 8 cases, which made up 17.02% out of all the accounts found. On 10 accounts, information needed for the research could not be found. Table 3 demonstrates general information on the forms of web activism:

Table 3

Forms of web activism of the candidates on the vkontakte.ru website

Form of web activism	*Number*
Wall posts	3
Statuses and references to other web resources	3
Candidates' groups	3
Photos	3

It can be seen that statuses, wall posts, uploaded pictures (of the candidates themselves or of their campaign products) were used as the forms of web activism on *vkontakte.ru* equally. Three candidates – Tacciana Kuŭšynava, Fiodar Masliennikaŭ (Čyhunačnaja constituency No. 20) and Aliaksandr Šumkievič – had their own information groups. The average age of the candidates registered for the site was 26.57 years. The minimum age was 18 and the maximum – 42. Table 4 shows the age structure of the candidates who have accounts on the website. The main age group of the candidates on *vkontakte.ru (vk.com)* is 22-25 years. It is followed by the 26-30 years group. Overall, the candidates under 30 years of age make up 77.85% out of the total number.

Table 4

Age structure of the candidates who have vkontakte.ru accounts

Age	*Number of candidates*	%
18-21	8	17.02
22-25	18	38.3
26-30	12	25.53
31-40	8	17.02
41-50	1	2.13
>50	-	-

Among the pro-governmental candidates, web-activism can be seen only in one case – a representative of the Liberal Democratic Party Eduard Kuzniacoŭ. Among the oppositional candidates, five were active on the web-site: Aliaksandr Lahviniec (Sucharaŭskaja constituency No. 30), Vitaĺ Karabkoŭ (Rakasoŭskaja constituency No. 9), Fiodar Masliennikaŭ, Aliaksandr Siarhiejenka (Anharskaja constituency No. 2) and Aliaksandr Šumkievič. Among the candidates with unidentified organisational affiliation, web-activism was seen only in the cases of Tacciana Kuŭšynava and Arciom Šarkoŭ (Sucharaŭskaja constituency No. 30).

The candidates Tacciana Kuŭšynava, Fiodar Masliennikaŭ and Aliaksandr Šumkievič had their own information groups. Kuŭšynava's group, as of 9 November 2010, had only 9 members, though it was open for every registered user on vkontakte.ru. The group presented general information about the candidate, a reference to the main web-site, 17 photos (3 out of them being spam) and 1 video. It can be concluded based on all the statistics that this group was poorly used for promoting the information related to the candidate's campaign.

The group of Masliennikaŭ, as of 9 November 2010, had 31 members. The group presents general information about the candidate which is divided into the following blocks: *About the Candidate*, *Programme – Only Facts*, *Who Can Vote?*, *Young Democrats – the Team of Deputies*. It should be noted that the group has good information contents: potential voters can learn about the main message of the candidate, the borders of the constituency and the team of the candidates in Minsk City representing the Young Democrats (Maladyja demakraty) – the youth organisation of the United Civil Party (UCP) (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja, AHP).

The group has feedback channels: mainly in the form of wall posts and also one comment in the section Meetings with voters. It also has four references to other information groups – of the United Civil Party, organisation Young Democrats, civil campaign "For Alternative Military Service" and the cultural unit of the UCP.

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The third information group – of Aliaksandr Šumkievič who represented the Youth Christian Social Union "Young Democrats" (Moladzievy chryscijanska-sacyjaĺny sajuz "Maladyja demakraty") (do not confuse with the Young Democrats of the UCP) – as of 9 November 2010, has 19 members. The group has poor information contents: the photo album contains 12 photos, 8 being spam. Some feedback posts are abusive and addressed both to the candidate and members of the group. This gives grounds to assume that the group as well as Šumkievič's account (all in all, 7 accounts of the candidate were found on vkontakte.ru) are fake.

facebook.com. In the overall rating (*alexa.com*, 2010), the social network *facebook.com* is ranked 14th. The Belarusian audience of this resource as of October 2010 was 119,800 users (*facebackers.com*, 2010). 28 accounts of the registered candidates were found on the *facebook.com* site (12.66% of all the candidates). Web activism during the local elections campaign was observed on 6 accounts (or 21.43% out of all the accounts found). The average age of the candidates with *facebook.com* accounts (28 persons) was 30.29 years, the minimum age – 18, and the maximum – 58 years.

Table 5

Age structure of the candidates who have facebook.com accounts

Age	*Number of candidates*	*%*
18-21	2	7.14
22-25	9	32.14
26-30	7	25
31-40	6	21.43
41-50	2	7.14
>50	2	7.14

Table 6

Forms of web activism of the candidates on the facebook.com site

Form of web activism	*Number*
Organising events and inviting guests	1
Video	1
Wall posts	5
Feedback	2
Information group	1
References, statuses	3
Photos	3

A popular form of web-activism on *facebook.com* is leaving wall posts. To a slightly lesser extent – statuses, references to other web-resources and

photos. Among the pro-governmental candidates, no one used *facebook* for web-activism. Contrary to that, a big number of oppositional candidates have accounts on this resource – overall 20 persons. Four of them – Vadzim Kanapacki (Pieršamajskaja constituency No. 56), Aliaksandr Lahviniec, Uladzimir Navasiad (Pliachanaŭskaja constituency No. 10) and Aliaksandra-Voĺha Tyhryckaja (Pieršamajskaja constituency No. 56) – used the web-site as a platform for informational support (Lahviniec also used it for HR mobilisation). Among the candidates with no organisational affiliation, web-activism was seen only in the cases of Tacciana Kuŭšynava and Arciom Šarkoŭ.

One candidate – Aliaksandr Lahviniec – had his own information group consisting of 111 members, as of November 9, 2010. The group had good information contents: the campaign news, references to articles in the media, and photos. Feedback channels were also noticeable. It should only be remarked that there was certain dissonance between the number of the candidate's friends on his own profile and the members of the group.

twitter. The *twitter* microblog system is the newest web service which has started gaining popularity in Belarus in spite of the existence of similar services like the global *jaiku.com*, Russian *juick.com* or Belarusian *speech.by*. But the study has shown that the growth of the popularity of *twitter* was not reflected in the candidates' web activism at the local elections 2010.

The searching methodology was the same as for *odnoklassniki.ru*, *facebook.com* and *vkontakte.ru*: first and family names and the place of residence were entered into the search engine (age was not entered). The searching process turned out to be the most complicated on *twitter*. Firstly, the system has limits by quantity of searches during one day. Secondly, the system does not have the transliteration function for first and family names. Therefore, the search was done by entering the Belarusian and Russian variants of the candidates' first and family names as well as Latin letters according to the rules of transliteration.[9] Additionally, the candidates were searched for through the search engine *google.com*, which indexes *twitter* posts.

As a result of the search, 9 twitter accounts belonging to the candidates were found: Valiancin Viačorka (Mirašničenkaŭskaja constituency No. 43), Viačaslaŭ Dzijanaŭ (Šuhajeŭskaja constituency No. 53), Iryna Hubskaja (Šuhajeŭskaja constituency No. 53), Tacciana Kuŭšynava, Aliaksandr Lahviniec, Fiodar Masliennikaŭ, Juryj Fabišeŭski (Kurasoŭščynskaja constituency No. 16), Artur Fińkievič (Ubarevicskaja constituency No. 7) and Aliaksiej Janukievič (Haladziedaŭskaja constituency No. 6).

Among the accounts found, only two candidates practiced web-activism: Aliaksandr Lahviniec and Fiodar Masliennikaŭ. The former used the resource only for the information coverage of the campaign and the latter also for recruiting volunteers.

[9] With the help of http://www.pravapis.org/latin.asp

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The account of Lahviniec had 6 posts (tweets) on the local elections. Five of them were in Belarusian and one in English. As of November 9, 2010, the account had 263 followers and followed 227 other accounts itself. These figures present a good balance between those who read Lahviniec's *twitter* and those who are read by the candidate. The account is open to the general public, which considerably improves its chances to be read by people without a registration on *twitter*.

Masliennikaŭ's account had 6 tweets on the elections and another tweet with an offer to join the candidate's team. As of November 9, 2010, the candidate's account had 184 followers and the candidate himself followed 114 accounts. The profile contains a reference to the official website of the Young Democrats, of which the candidate is a member. The account is also open to the general public.

No web activism related to the local elections was noticed on the other accounts. On some of them (of Viačorka, Dzijanaŭ, Fińkievič and Janukievič), the first posts are dated already after the elections. And in the cases of Hubskaja, Kuŭšynava and Fabišeŭski the accounts were simply not used.

Twitter allows the creation of hash-tags which are used to write posts in thematic groups. Thus, a special tag *#electby* was created before the elections. The candidates whose profiles on *twitter* were found did not make use of this tag for self promotion or HR mobilisation. The tag was mostly used by election observers.

Personal websites and blogs. The monthly audience of the Belarusian segment of the *livejournal.com* blog system is more than 270,000 people (*electroname.com*, 2010). The site holds the 13th place by popularity (*alexa.com*, 2010).

The search revealed 13 blogs of the candidates (of Kudzin, Radkievič, Šylaŭ, Hubskaja, Korban, Lahviniec, Masliennikaŭ, Navasiad, Ptašnik, Mieliaškievič, Jančurevič, Kuzniacoŭ and Kuŭšynava) and 5 websites (of Kuŭšynava, Lahviniec, Amiaĺčuk, Šarkoŭ and Jazaŭ). Apart from that, a fan club of the candidate Kuŭšynava was found on the *livejournal*.

The content analysis of the blogs demonstrates that the most effective work was done by Kuŭšynava, Radkievič, Lahviniec and Ptašnik. Iryna Ptašnik's blog was created specifically for the local elections campaign, which is indirectly suggested by the name of the blog.

The candidates Hubskaja, Mieliaškievič and Navasiad also made an effort to run election-related blogs. But their blog-activism was not productive enough.

The candidates Kudzin, Šylaŭ, Korban, Masliennikaŭ, Jančurevič and Kuzniacoŭ either did very little to organise the work of their registered blogs or completely ignored this type of web activism.

As to the fan club of Tacciana Kuŭšynava on *livejournal.com*, it is very poorly filled with information: it has only 3 posts and a small number of friends.

The content analysis of the candidates' personal websites reveals that the most effective resources were those of Kuŭšynava and Lahviniec. The former's site, due to good promotion, became really recognisable and popular. Besides the information part, the site is used for the mobilisation of resources for the campaign and contains certain suggestions on how to help the candidate.

Twenty articles on the candidate's campaign were posted to Lahviniec's site during the period from February 18 till April 30, 2010. Many of the articles have photos and some of them have videos.

The sites of the other three candidates have poor characteristics of effectiveness: bad technical organisation and insufficient information (and in the case of A. Šarkoŭ, grammatical mistakes).

Other types of web activism. Other types of web activism can include mailing lists and video and banner ads. In order to find out whether mailing lists were used by the candidates during the elections campaign, it is necessary to refer to additional methods: questionnaires or interviews with candidates/voters. No additional methods were applied within the framework of this study but it is known that this type of web activism was used as a form of HR mobilisation (looking for volunteers) and information distribution by Aliaksandr Lahviniec.

The email database could have been formed in the process of signature collection when the candidate could ask those who agreed to put their signatures in his support for their email addresses. Besides, the candidates could use their own databases of contacts.

Only one case was observed when a candidate used banner ads – Tacciana Kuŭšynava. The banner advertised the candidate's personal site and also displayed the slogan of the campaign – "*Beauty will save the world*".

Own video adverts were made by the candidates Dzmitryj Kučuk and Aliaksandra-VoĺIha Tyhryckaja. The promo video by Kučuk was uploaded to the official web page of the Belarusian Party of Greens (Bielaruskaja partyja "Zialionyja") and to the party's *youtube.com* channel; Tyhryckaja's video – to *youtube*.

Main Research Results

Going back to the primary question about whether the Internet is used as an applied instrument in a local political campaign in Belarus, the example of Minsk City provides us with the following data. Among all the registered candidates in Minsk, 70 (31.67% of the overall number of the registered candidates) had *odnoklassniki.ru* accounts, 47 (21.27%) – *vkontakte.ru*, and 29 (13.12%) – *facebook.com* ones. In the *twitter.com* blog system there were 9 accounts (4.07%), in the *livejournal.com*, *blogspot.com* and other blog systems – 13 (5.88%). 5 candidates (2.26%) had personal websites.

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The analysis of the age structure of the candidates with registered accounts shows that the candidates with *odnoklassniki.ru* profiles have the highest average age – 32.23 years. The average age of the candidates who have personal websites is 31.4 years. The average age of the candidates who are registered in the *livejournal*, *blogspot* and other blog systems is 31.31 years. This group is followed by the users of *facebook.com* – 30.03 years, *vkontakte.ru* – 26.57 years and the system *twitter*.com – 26.4 years.

If one uses the category "youth" in relation to the candidates under 30 years of age, then, according to the age data of the study, we can conclude that it was young people who predominantly used the Internet for the purposes of the elections campaign (see Table 7).

Table 7

The age of the candidates who used the Internet during the elections campaign

Name of the resource	*Average age of the users who were active on the web*	*Age structure of the users under 31 years of age (%)*	*Age structure of the users of 31+ years of age (%)*
odnoklassniki.ru	32.06	56.25	43.75
vkontakte.ru	28.75	62.5	37.5
facebook.com	32	50	50
twitter.com	30	50	50

If we compare the web activism along the lines of political affiliation, we get the following situation (see Table 8).

Table 8

Distribution of the candidates who used the Internet in the elections campaign according to political affiliation

Name of the resource	*Number of pro-governmental candidates (%)*	*Number of oppositional candidates (%)*	*Number of candidates with no organisational affiliation (%)*
odnoklassniki.ru	25	31,25	43,75
vkontakte.ru	12.5	62.5	25
facebook.com	0	66.67	33.33
twitter.com	0	100	0
other blog systems	22.22	33.33	44.44
personal websites	0	20	80

It is obvious that on all the Internet resources, the majority of active users represent the groups of oppositional candidates and candidates without organisational affiliation. The latter group prevails on three resources: the *odnoklassniki.ru* website, blog systems (excluding *twitter*) and personal sites. The group of oppositional candidates takes the leading positions also on three resources: *vkontakte.ru*, *facebook.com*, and has a 100% result on the *twitter.com* microblog. The group of pro-governmental candidates is represented among the users of the site *odnoklassniki.ru* (a quarter) and among those who have personal blogs (slightly more than 20%). But this group is not at all represented on *facebook.com* and the *twitter.com* blog system, and also does not have anyone with a personal site.

Information on the web activism is presented in the Tables 9, 10 and 11 (see the Appendix). According to the data, the *odnoklassniki.ru* resource was most effectively used by the candidates Eduard Kuzniacoŭ (pro-governmental) and Juryj Mieliaškievič (oppositional). The resource *vkontakte.ru* was best utilized by Aliaksandr Lahviniec, Fiodar Masliennikaŭ and Aliaksandr Siarhiejenka (all oppositional); *facebook.com* – by Vadzim Kanapacki and Aliaksandr Lahviniec (oppositional); *twitter.com* – by Aliaksandr Lahviniec and Fiodar Masliennikaŭ (both oppositional).

Among the owners of personal blogs, the most successful and practice-related were Michail Radkievič (candidate with no evident organisational affiliation), Aliaksandr Lahviniec (oppositional), Iryna Ptašnik (with no evident organisational affiliation), Tacciana Kuŭšynava (no organisational affiliation) and Juryj Mieliaškievič (oppositional). Among the owners of personal sites – Aliaksandr Lahviniec (oppositional) and Tacciana Kuŭšynava (without organisational affiliation).

If we look at the qualitative indicators in a complex way, we can see that the group of oppositional candidates was more effective in using the Internet– 11 cases (one on *odnoklassniki.ru*, three on *vkontakte.ru*, three on *facebook*.com and *twitter.com*, two in the blog systems and one among the owners of personal sites). And it should be noted that the representatives of the opposition have a 100% indicator of effective web activism on *vkontakte*, *facebook* and *twitter*. Among the representatives of the group of the candidates without organisational affiliation, three candidates effectively used the blog systems and one used a personal site. Among the pro-governmental candidates, only one – a member of the Liberal Democratic Party Eduard Kuzniacoŭ – effectively used a web-resource (the *odnoklassniki.ru* site) in his campaign.

Among the candidates who got elected, web activism was seen only in the cases of Vadzim Kudzin and Ihar Šylaŭ (both had personal blogs), but the level of web activism on these resources was poor. Therefore, it can be concluded that the pro-governmental candidates used the Internet resources in their campaigns very ineffectively. Contrary to that, the group of oppositional

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candidates took leading positions in web activism. But this conclusion cannot be considered as totally optimistic since the majority of the candidates even in this group were not registered in the social networks or blog systems at all, not mentioning personal sites. The leading positions of the oppositional candidates on some resources can be accounted for by the fact that the opposition have been outside the political system for a decade already and, therefore, the candidates who do not have access to the state traditional and electronic media used the opportunity to send their electoral messages at least via the Internet.

Overall, the research results give grounds to conclude that even in the capital city, the Internet was not in the majority of the cases used by the candidates in their campaigns and, thus, did not become an applied instrument in this year's local elections.

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Appendix

Table 9

Content analysis of odnoklassniki.ru accounts of candidates

No.	*Surname and name of Candidate*	*Name and number of Constituency*	*Membership in parties and public organisations*	*Age*	*Activity*
1	Ačaretnaja Kryscina	Zaslaŭskaja No. 40	The United Civil Party (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP)	27	No
2	Alšeŭski Dzmitryj	Aŭtazavodskaja No. 4	Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Hramada" (Bielaruskaja sacyjal-demakratyčnaja partyja "Hramada")	42	No
3	Amialčuk Eduard	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party	38	Biographical information
4	Bandarenka Aliena	Lošyckaja No. 14	Non-party	40	Statuses (1), biographical information
5	Baranoŭski Ihar	Aŭtazavodskaja No. 4	Non-party	47	No
6	Bašura Michail	Navavilienskaja No. 42	Non-party	34	No
7	Buraja Tacciana	Miendzialiejeŭskaja No. 55	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Bielaruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja); Youth of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (Moladź BChD); NGO "Zaasviet"	25	Statuses (1)
8	Cichamiraŭ Aliaksandr	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	Non-party	25	No
9	Čysty Andrej	Lahojskaja No. 44	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieralna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	37	Statuses (1), biographical information
10	Doŭnar Viktar	Čyhunačnaja No. 20	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieralna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	29	No

11	Dubinskaja Kaciaryna	Masiukoŭščynskaja No. 34	Non-party	44	No
12	Dyĺko Mikalaj	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Belarusian Party of the Left "The Fair World" (Biela-ruskaja partyja lievych "Spraviadlivy sviet")	59	No
13	Fiedarec Siarhiej	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Non-party	34	Statuses (8)
14	Fińkievič Artur	Ubarevicskaja No. 7	"Young Belarus" ("Maladaja Bielaruś"), Non-party	25	No
15	Haradziecki Anton	Staravilienskaja No. 41	Non-party	31	No
16	Harškova Hanna	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party	25	No
17	Chasinievič Viačaslaŭ	Adojeŭskaja No. 36	Non-party	42	No
18	Jahorava Hanna	Žudroŭskaja No. 35	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP)	25	No
19	Jakuboŭski Siarhiej	Majakoŭskaja No. 13	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	26	No
20	Januškievič Vitaĺ	Miendzialiejeŭskaja No. 55	Non-party	23	No
21	Jasievič Dzmitryj	Šabanoŭskaja No. 3	Non-party; "Young Front" ("Malady front")	28	Biographical information
22	Kalacki Mikalaj	Šuhajeŭskaja No. 53	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja); NGO "Belarusian Society of the Visually Impaired" ("Bielaruskaje tavarystva invalidaŭ pa zroku")	28	No
23	Kasatkina Voĺha	Lošyckaja No. 14	Belarusian Social Sports Party (Bielaruskaja sacyjalna-spartyŭnaja par-tyja); GONGO "Belarusian Republican Youth Union" (Bielaruski respublikanski sajuz moladzi)	27	Statuses (1)
24	Karabkoŭ Vitalij	Rakasoŭskaja No. 9	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP)	30	Photos (2)
25	Kaziejeŭ Mikalaj	Bahdanovickaja No. 45	Non-party	30	No
26	Kazloŭski Siarhiej	Rakasoŭskaja No. 9	NGO "Legal protection for consumers ("Pravaachova spažyŭcoŭ"); Non-party	35	No

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27	Klimovič Natallia	Čkalaŭskaja No. 19	Non-party	47	No
28	Kontuś Jaŭhienij	Navavilienskaja No. 42	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	25	No
29	Krasnikievič Aliaksiej	Urucskaja No. 51	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	29	No
30	Kryžanoŭski Jaŭhienij	Zaslaŭskaja No. 40	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	54	No
31	Kucy Aliak-sandr	Kalinoŭskaja No. 49	Non-party	36	No
32	Kudzin Vadzim	Viasnianskaja No. 39	Non-party	21	Photos (1); biographical information
33	Kuŭšynaŭ Aliaksandr	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP)	29	Status with link to the site krasota.eu
34	Kuŭšynava Tacciana	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	Non-party	30	Status with link to the site krasota.eu
35	Kuzniacoŭ Eduard	Mirašničenkaŭskaja No. 43	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	35	Statuses (5), writing on the wall (1), feedback (1), photos (1)
36	Mankovič Ruslan	Uschodniaja No. 52	Non-party	46	No
37	Masliennikaŭ Fiodar	Čyhunačnaja No. 20	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP); "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	22	No
38	Mieliaškievič Juryj	Slabadskaja No. 28	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF), The Movement "For Free-dom" (Ruch "Za svabodu")	27	Statuses (7)
39	Muzykin Aliaksiej	Vasniacoŭskaja No. 5	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	28	Photos (1)
40	Navasiad Uladzimir	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Organising Committee of the Party of Freedom and Progress (arhkamitet Partyi Svabody i Prahresu); NGO "Legal protection for consumers ("Pravaachova spažyŭcoŭ")	42	No

41	Niesci-aronak Aliak-sandr	Lošyckaja No. 14	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	25	No
42	Pietražycki Alieh	Asanalijeŭskaja No. 15	Non-party	26	No
43	Pilipčuk Aliaksandr	Zachodniaja No. 29	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	23	No
44	Prasalovič Viktar	Traktarazavodskaja No. 57	Non-party	51	No
45	Ptašnik Iryna	Zachodniaja No. 29	Non-party	53	Photos (1); statuses (3); links to other web pages
46	Radzionaŭ Aliaksiej	Čkalaŭskaja No. 20	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	37	No
47	Ramančyk Vieranika	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	24	No
48	Sadoŭski Dzianis	Kamiennahorskaja No. 32	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Biela-ruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja)	26	No
49	Samkovič Barys	Kupalaŭskaja No. 12	Non-party	26	Statuses (2)
50	Savanovič Michail	Kaĺvaryjskaja No. 37	Non-party	54	No
51	Sihajeŭ Aliaksiej	Karbyšaŭskaja No. 50	Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Hramada" (Bielaruskaja sacyjal-demakratyčnaja partyja "Hramada")	29	No
52	Skarabahaty Lieanid	Kastryčnickaja No. 17	Non-party	45	No
53	Stain Dzi-anis	Čyhunačnaja No. 20	Republican Party (Respub-likanskaja partyja)	25	No
54	Staravojtava Hanna	Čyrvonaborskaja No. 31	Non-party	43	No
55	Stralkoŭski Andrej	Asanalijeŭskaja No. 15	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	33	No
56	Stralkoŭski Vasilij	Malininskaja No. 8	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	42	No
57	Šaŭcoŭ Dzmitryj	Kujbyšaŭskaja No. 46	Non-party	36	Biographical information

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58	Šelieh Michail	Čyrvonaborskaja No. 31	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	29	No
59	Šeŭčyk Andrej	Malininskaja No. 8	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP)	36	No
60	Špakoŭski Aliaksandr	Čyrvonaborskaja No. 31	Non-party; Right Alliance (Pravy Aljans)	25	No
61	Šulakoŭ Dzmitryj	Vasniacoŭskaja No. 5	Non-party	37	No
62	Šumkievič Aliaksandr	Viasnianskaja No. 39	Non-party, Youth Christian-Social Union “Young Democrats” (Moladzievy chryscijanska-sacyjaĺny sajuz “Maladyja demakraty”)	27	Biographical information
63	Šybut Uladzimir	Karbyšaŭskaja No. 50	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	29	No
64	Tarliuk Siarhiej	Rakasoŭskaja No. 9	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	30	No
65	Uchnalioŭ Valieryj	Akademičnaja No. 48	Belarusian Party of the Left “ The Fair World” (Bielaruskaja partyja lievych “Spraviadlivy sviet”)	55	No
66	Vasilječ Ihar	Hrušaŭskaja No. 22	Non-party	49	No
67	Vaskrasienski Juryj	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	Communist Party of Belarus (Kamunistyčnaja partyja Bielarusi)	33	Closed profile
68	Vaškoŭ Andrej	Jasieninskaja No. 24	Non-party	29	No
69	Žarkina Tacciana	Achockaja No. 1	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	28	No
70	Ždanovič Dzmitryj	Jasieninskaja No. 24	GONGO “Belarusian Republican Youth Union” (Bielaruski respublikanski sajuz moladzi)	27	No

Table 10

Content analysis of vkontakte.ru accounts of candidates

No.	*Surname and name of Candidate*	*Name and number of Constituency*	*Membership in parties and public organisations*	*Age*	*Activity*
1	Arloŭ Arciom	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party	24	No

2	Babak Viktar	Lahojskaja No. 44	Communist Party of Belarus (Kamunistyčnaja partyja Bielarusi)	42	No
3	Bandarenka Aliena	Lošyckaja No. 14	Non-party	40	No
4	Bašura Michail	Navavilienskaja No. 42	Non-party	34	No
5	Buraja Tacciana	Miendzialiejeŭskaja No. 55	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Bielaruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja); Youth of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (Moladź BChD); NGO "Zaasviet"	25	No
6	Cichamiraŭ Aliaksandr	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	Non-party	25	No
7	Dziaviatka Uladzimir	Bahdanovickaja No. 45	Non-party	21	Closed profile
8	Dzijanaŭ Viačaslaŭ	Šuhajeŭskaja No. 53	NGO "Movement of the Future" ("Ruch budučyni"), Non-party	23	No
9	Fabišeŭski Juryj	Kurasoŭščynskaja No. 16	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	27	No
10	Fińkievič Artur	Ubarevicskaja No. 7	Non-party, "Young Belarus" ("Maladaja Bielaruś")	25	No
11	Harškova Hanna	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party	25	Closed profile
12	Hubskaja Iryna	Šuhajeŭskaja No. 53	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Bielaruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja); Youth of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (Moladź BChD)	18	Closed profile
13	Hur Siarhiej	Uschodniaja No. 52	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieralna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	31	No
14	Jahorava Hanna	Žudroŭskaja No. 35	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	25	No
15	Jančurevič Viktar	Kalinoŭskaja No. 49	Non-party	30	No

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16	Janukievič Aliaksiej	Haladziedaŭskaja No. 6	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF)	33	No
17	Januškievič Vitalij	Miendzialiejeŭskaja No. 55	Non-party	23	No
18	Kamienieva Liuboŭ	Bahdanovickaja No. 45	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Biela-ruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja); Youth of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (Moladź BChD); NGO “Belarusian Association of Assistance to Disabled Children and Young People” (Bielaruska-ja asacyjacyja dapamohi dzieciam-invalidam i maladym invalidam)	22	No
19	Karabkoŭ Vitalij	Rakasoŭskaja No. 9	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP)	30	Photos (1)
20	Karmazin Dzmitryj	Aeraflockaja No. 18	Non-party	39	No
21	Karpovič Siarhiej	Aeraflockaja No. 18	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF), “Youth of the BPF” (Moladź BNF)	23	Closed profile
22	Kasatkina Voĺha	Lošyckaja No. 14	Belarusian Social Sports Party (Bielaruskaja sacyjaĺna-spartyŭnaja par-tyja); GONGO “Belarusian Republican Youth Union” (Bielaruski respublikanski sajuz moladzi)	27	No
23	Kaspiarovič Dzmitryj	Kujbyšaŭskaja No. 46	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF)	28	No
24	Kontuś Jaŭhienij	Navavilienskaja No. 42	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	25	No
25	Korban Alieh	Rafijeŭskaja No. 25	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP) “Young democrats” (“Maladyja demakraty”)	25	No
26	Kudzin Vadzim	Viasnianskaja No. 39	Non-party	21	Closed profile
27	Kumiec Uladzimir	Vasniacoŭskaja No. 5	NGO “Movement of the Future” (“Ruch budučyni”) Non-party	21	No

28	Kuŭšynava Tacciana	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	Non-party	30	Link to personal website (1); Candidate Information Community
29	Kuzniacoŭ Eduard	Mirašničenkaŭskaja No. 43	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	35	Photo Gallery (1); writing on the wall (1)
30	Lahviniec Aliaksandr	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party, The Movement "For Freedom" (Ruch "Za svabodu")	38	Writing on the wall (3); link to personal website (1)
31	Majeŭski Haj	Kalinoŭskaja No. 49	Non-party	20	Closed profile
32	Masliennikaŭ Fiodar	Čyhunačnaja No. 20	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	22	Candidate Information Community; Photo Gallery (1)
33	Mieliaškievič Juryj	Slabadskaja No. 28	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF), The Movement "For Freedom" (Ruch "Za svabodu"), NGO "Chernobyl initiatives Support Center" (Centr padtrymki čarnobylskich inicyjatyŭ)	27	No
34	Niesciaronak Aliaksandr	Lošyckaja No. 14	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	25	No
35	Pietražycki Alieh	Asanalijeŭskaja No. 15	Non-party	26	Closed profile
36	Pilipčuk Aliaksandr	Zachodniaja No. 29	Liberal Democratic Party (Libieraĺna-demakratyčnaja partyja)	23	No
37	Prakapienka Maksim	Hrušaŭskaja No. 22	Belarusian Party of the Left " The Fair World" (Bielaruskaja partyja lievych "Spraviadlivy sviet")	31	No
38	Prakapovič Siarhiej	Kupalaŭskaja No. 12	Non-party	21	No
39	Radkievič Michail	Puškinskaja No. 38	NGO " Serbian Centre" (Sierbski centr), Non-party	20	Closed profile (only 2 Profile)
40	Rašetnik Aliaksiej	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Non-party, NGO "Movement of the Future" ("Ruch budučyni")	19	Closed profile

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41	Sadoŭski Dzianis	Kamiennahorskaja No. 32	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Biela-ruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja)	26	No
42	Sihajeŭ Aliaksiej	Karbyšaŭskaja No. 50	Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Hramada" (Bielaruskaja sacyjal-demakratyčnaja partyja "Hramada")	29	No
43	Šarkoŭ Arciom	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party; NGO "Council for Small and Medium Business" (Saviet maloha i siareniaha pradprymaĺnictva)	24	Link to personal website (1)
44	Šumkievič Aliaksandr	Viasnianskaja No. 39	Non-party, Youth Christian-Social Union "Young Democrats" (Moladzievy chryscijanska-sacyjaĺny sajuz "Maladyja demakraty")	27	Closed profile (only 7 Profile); Candidate Information Community (fake)
45	Viliucha Arciom	Šuhajeŭskaja No. 53	Non-party	23	No
46	Ziaziulčyk Uladzimir	Staravilienskaja No. 41	Non-party	26	No

Table 11

Content analysis of facebook.com accounts of candidates

No.	*Surname and name of Candidate*	*Name and number of Constituency*	*Membership in parties and public organisations*	*Age*	*Activity*
1	Ačaretnaja Kryscina	Zaslaŭskaja No. 40	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzian-skaja partyja; AHP)	27	No
2	Babak Viktar	Lahojskaja No. 44	Communist Party of Belarus (Kamunistyčnaja partyja Bielarusi)	42	No
3	Bašura Michail	Navavilienskaja No. 42	Non-party	34	No
4	Duboŭski Eduard	Pieršamajskaja No. 56	Republican Party of Labour and Justice (Respub-likanskaja partyja pracy i spraviadlivasci)	58	No
5	Dzijanaŭ Viačaslaŭ	Šuhajeŭskaja No. 53	Non-party, NGO "Movement of the Future" ("Ruch budučyni")	23	No

6	Fabišeŭski Juryj	Kurasoŭščynskaja No. 16	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	26	No
7	Fińkievič Artur	Ubarevicskaja No. 7	"Young Belarus" ("Maladaja Bielaruś"); Non-party	25	No
8	Hubskaja Iryna	Šuhajeŭskaja No. 53	Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Bielaruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja); Youth of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (Moladź BChD)	18	No
9	Jahorava Hanna	Žudroŭskaja No. 35	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	25	No
10	Janukievič Aliaksiej	Haladziedaŭskaja No. 6	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF)	33	No
11	Kamienieva Liuboŭ	Bahdanovickaja No. 45	Youth of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (Moladź BCHD), Organising Committee of the Party of the Belarusian Christian Democracy (arhkamitet Partyi Bielaruskaja chryscijanskaja demakratyja)	22	No
12	Kanapacki Vadzim	Pieršamajskaja No. 56	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF)	34	Writing on the wall; Photo Album Campaign (1)
13	Kaspiarovič Dzmitryj	Kujbyšaŭskaja No. 46	Non-party	28	No
14	Korban Alieh	Rafijeŭskaja No. 25	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	25	No
15	Kryžanoŭski Jaŭhienij	Zaslaŭskaja No. 40	Non-party	54	No
16	Kučuk Dzmitryj	Masiukoŭščynskaja No. 34	Belarusian Party of Greens (Bielaruskaja partyja "Zialionyja")	36	No
17	Kuŭšynaŭ Aliaksandr	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP)	29	No
18	Kuŭšynava Tacciana	Mašeraŭskaja No. 47	Non-party	30	Links to personal website (1)

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19	Liava Arciom	Rakasoŭskaja No. 9	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF)	33	No
20	Lahviniec Aliaksandr	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	The Movement "For Freedom" (Ruch "Za svabodu"); Non-party	38	Communication with voters; video; Candidate Information Community; Campaign photos; organisation of events and invitations; writing on the wall; links to personal website
21	Masliennikaŭ Fiodar	Čyhunačnaja No. 20	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	22	No
22	Mieliaškievič Juryj	Slabadskaja No. 28	The Belarusian Popular Front Party (Partyja BNF), The Movement "For Freedom" (Ruch "Za svabodu")	27	No
23	Navasiad Uladzimir	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Organising Committee of the Party of Freedom and Progress (arhkamitet Partyi Svabody i Prahresu)	42	Writing on the wall (1)
24	Pietražycki Alieh	Asanalijeŭskaja No. 15	Non-party	26	No
25	Rašetnik Aliaksiej	Pliachanaŭskaja No. 10	Non-party, NGO "Movement of the Future" ("Ruch budučyni")	19	No
26	Siarhiejenka Aliaksandr	Anharskaja No. 2	The United Civil Party; (Abjadnanaja hramadzianskaja partyja; AHP), "Young democrats" ("Maladyja demakraty")	24	No
27	Šarkoŭ Arciom	Sucharaŭskaja No. 30	Non-party; NGO "Council for Small and Medium Business" (Saviet maloha i siaredniaha pradprymalnictva)	24	Links to personal website (1); writing on the wall (1)
28	Tyhryckaja Aliaksandra-Voĺha	Pieršamajskaja No. 56	Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Hramada" (Bielaruskaja sacyjal-demakratyčnaja partyja "Hramada")	24	Writing on the wall; photos

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DEFENCE SYSTEMS IN LITHUANIA AND BELARUS: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Since gaining state independence, the paths taken by Belarus and Lithuania have essentially diverged, among other things, in the field of security and defence. The Republic of Lithuania took its decision on membership in the European and trans-Atlantic institutions without delay and began implementing the required reforms in order to become a fully-fledged NATO and EU member. Belarus, in the meantime, chose to integrate with Russia, a step that led to its return to the old policy of containment, which in general determines the trend in the reform of its military forces.

The article studies the trajectory of approaches to security and defence in Belarus and Lithuania since the two countries obtained independence, and attempts to offer a comparative analysis of the two neighbouring states' defence systems.

Lithuania. The Dimensions of the Military Reforms

The military reforms in Lithuania have gone through several stages. The first stage was characterised by creation of military forces from the ground level, when the Lithuanian Voluntary Defence Forces and former Soviet officers formed the core of the Lithuanian Army. At this stage, defence planning was rather eclectic. The main priorities of the defence policy at the time were laying the foundations for democratic control and de-politicising the military (A Brief History of the Restoration…).

In 1994, Lithuania officially applied to NATO. The same year, the country joined the new NATO programme Partnership for Peace, which had been launched in order to help the new independent states with their military reforms and increase operational compatibility between their armies and NATO forces. In 1996, Lithuania sent its troops to Bosnia and Herzegovina under the colours of the Alliance (Establishing Modern Army).

The same year, Lithuania passed the Law on the Fundamentals of National Security, which outlined the purposes of national security and basic principles of military defence. The Law on the Fundamentals of National

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Security stated that the concepts of all-embracing and unconditional self-defence and civil resistance were the guidelines for defence planning. The concepts determined a threat-assessment approach to planning. In other words, the Lithuanian military forces and society were supposed to be prepared for a worst-case scenario, i.e. a large-scale territorial aggression on Lithuania and its sovereignty. In the circumstances when NATO membership was a matter of the distant future and the situation in the neighbouring countries which could have an impact on the national security was far from stable or predictable, such an approach was viewed as the most adequate (Paulauskas: 126–127).

In 1999, the first round of NATO enlargement since the collapse of the USSR took place and the Membership Action Plan (MAP) concerning the next candidates, including Lithuania, was adopted. It provided an impetus for a considerable change in the planning principles. Although all-embracing self-defence and civil resistance still remained the central core of defence planning, NATO's recommendations were a factor in a gradual reform of the defence policy.

The prospective NATO membership and the related guaranty of collective defence made the necessity of threat-based approach to planning not so apparent. For this reason, the Lithuanian leadership had to shift to a capabilities-based approach to defence planning in order to use limited resources in the most effective way. In practice, this meant concentrating on clearly defined top priorities, instead of developing the whole spectrum of military forces (Heinemann-Gruder, 2002b: 20).

In the end, a number of significant international events, such as 9/11, a rapprochement between Russia and the USA, the 2002 transformative NATO summit in Prague and an invitation to join NATO resulted in another important change in Lithuanian defence planning.

After the National Security Strategy was adopted in 2002 (National Security Strategy, 2002), Lithuania continued revising its National Defence Strategy. Approved in 2004, it reassessed threats to security and the strategic context in which Lithuania found itself. Basing on the threat assessment, the strategy determined the missions and purposes of the Lithuanian military forces.

Alongside the revision of the defence strategy, the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence, assisted by an American group of experts, initiated a reform of the structure of the military forces and adopted a scenario-based approach to planning (Lithuania's Security and Foreign Policy Strategy).

This approach is essentially about determining the most likely scenarios of threat development and facilities required to eliminate the threats. Once the necessary forces have been established, the next step is to find out their most serious shortcomings so that further defence planning is aimed at doing away with them as much as possible (Paulauskas: 130).

Thus, the invitation to join NATO, the reassessment of threats and the new approach to defence planning enabled Lithuania to give up soon the concept of territorial defence which the country had adhered to ever since restoring its independence. The shift facilitated reorganisation of the military forces so that they could accomplish new missions.

Collective Defence instead of All-Embracing Self-Defence

The guaranty of collective defence accounts for the significant change in the Lithuanian defence policy before and after the 2002 NATO summit in Prague. The principle of collective defence, provided for in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, lies in a collective repulse of an external invasion on a NATO member by joint forces of all the Treaty.

Considering the new reality, Lithuania has revised its concept of all-embracing and unconditional self-defence which was at the core of the containment strategy. At present, in case of aggression, the mission of the national military forces would be to strengthen NATO collective defence operations, rather than just defend the country's territory.

Proceeding from these assumptions, territorial units were supposed to be reorganised, the number of reserve forces was going to be reduced and the concept of general conscription was to be reconsidered. The reform was grounded on quite an obvious presumption that Lithuania with its limited resources would not be able to take an active part in most of NATO operations, at the same time maintaining numerous forces of territorial defence that lacked mobility. For this reason, Lithuania chose to stake on deeper specialisation within NATO and to withdraw from territorial defence (Heinemann-Gruder, 2002b: 28).

A Change in the Nature of Threats and New Functions of the Military

In the 20th century, the main purpose of military forces was about containment and territorial defence against potential invaders. When the "cold war" was over and the USSR split up, the nature of threats to security changed radically. At present, the most significant threats come from non-state actors, rather than foreign armies. The former make use of unconventional methods of waging war, which makes traditional containment measures inefficient. These actors do not pose a threat to a country's territorial integrity, but target unprotected civil buildings and infrastructure and civilians. That is why prevention has become actually the only method to combat non-state actors and regimes that support terrorists.

The change in the nature of threats did not only result in the transformation of the strategic situation in the region, but also contributed to a shift in the purposes of the military, i.e. defence of the national territory gave way

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to defence of public buildings and infrastructure as well as police missions. Now, the military had to learn how to respond to crises and take part in peacekeeping operations.

This kind of transformation requires that the army should be prepared for a number of new activities. Firstly, inside the country, they need to co-operate closely with civil authorities and the police in case of terrorist attacks and other emergencies that might require the military forces to interfere. Secondly, the army is supposed to learn how to take part in crisis-response operations, within multinational missions. And thirdly, in peacekeeping operations they should be able to co-operate effectively with the local civil society whose members can often be hostile to the peacekeeping forces (Paulauskas: 133).

How the Lithuanian Military Forces Got Adapted to the New Situation

For the above reasons, in its new military doctrine, which was adopted in 2004, the following principles laid the foundations for military planning in Lithuania:

- absence of threat of a military attack;
- a large-scale conflict in the Baltic region is bound to be preceded by a long escalation period;
- Lithuania will not have to defend its territory alone;
- NATO crisis-response forces are deployed in 15 days;
- there is no need for universal military forces;
- threats must be combated where they emerge (The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania).

The whole Lithuanian strategic concept was changed, too. Until 2004, it was based on containment and territorial defence, whereas the principles of collective defence and specialisation of the military forces made the foundation of the new 2004 document. In addition, the new Defence Strategy outlined the basic principles and purposes of the military reform in Lithuania. The most important of them are as follows:

- to further develop the capability and improve the quality of the military forces instead of creating new territorial structures and raising their numbers;
- to create smaller but more mobile units that can be deployed faster;
- to achieve higher standards for collective defence and other joint missions with NATO forces;
- to keep defence plans in balance with the existing resources (Ibid.).

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These principles provided a base for the development of the Lithuanian army reform plan, which included the following:

- a response brigade (including the HQ, two mechanised infantry battalions, two motorised infantry battalions and an artillery battalion) was going to be created by 2008;
- a deployable and supportable infantry battalion (Rookla battalion) was going to be created for the whole spectrum of NATO missions;
- territorial units were going to be freed from territorial defence tasks;
- a flexible logistic system was going to be created; it should be able to support any operation within the country or abroad;
- the training system was going to be reorganised;
- anti-terrorist capabilities were to be enhanced;
- the most advanced weapons and technologies were to be bought (Defence Reform).

The final vision of the Lithuanian army following its re-organisation and modernisation is that of a small, modernised, well-equipped and trained, mobile and deployable army that is able to take part in the whole spectrum of NATO missions (Defence Reform).

The information given above shows that the Lithuanian military forces have undergone a profound transformation since the Republic of Lithuania restored its sovereignty. NATO membership resulted in threats being reviewed and fundamental principles of defence planning being reconsidered. Having guaranties of NATO collective defence, Lithuania gave up the containment concept and all-embracing defence, which released resources for further modernisation of the military forces and deeper specialisation within NATO framework. When Lithuania renounced territorial defence, it allowed the country to take a more active part in peacekeeping missions abroad.

At the same time, the Lithuanian leadership has certain reservations concerning NATO defence guaranties.[2] For example, when a Russian fighter fell in Lithuania in September 2005, it stirred a big discussion whether NATO would be able to respond promptly to an invasion of Lithuania. The same year, the Lithuanian President in his interview to a German paper aired fears about Belarusian tanks that might attack Lithuania (Heinemann-Gruder, 2002b).

Having delegated responsibility for the country's defence to NATO, the Lithuanian leadership cannot be completely confident that state security is granted once and for all, particularly considering NATO's uncertain development prospects. For this reason, Lithuania continues to pin its hopes on the

[2] NATO agreed to spread the plan for the defence of Poland to the Baltic States as late as in 2010, in other words, in six years after Lithuania joined the Treaty.

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USA as its main defence guarantor and belongs to all coalitions the USA has formed. Such a strategic choice explains the official Vilnius's quite chilly attitude to the European security and defence policy, as well as the prospects of establishing a European army within the EU framework, which are regarded as a counterbalance to NATO and American domination in the area of European security.

In the aftermath of the Georgia – Russia war in August of 2008, a number of right-wing Lithuanian political figures, projecting the Georgian situation on Lithuania, began talking again about the need to go back to the practice of comprehensive territorial defence and conscription. Yet, so far these voices have not gained enough weight to change the situation in the defence area of the Republic of Lithuania.

Belarusian Defence Dilemmas

Belarus chose a completely different path. Unlike the Republic of Lithuania, the Belarusian political elite in the early 1990s did not reach a consensus on integration into the European or trans-Atlantic institutions and reformed the Belarusian military according to their own vision of the strategic situation.

In contrast with the Baltic States, Belarus did not have to build its military from the "ground level". After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus obtained an impressive legacy of about 1,500 military units with more than 240,000 strong; 81 strategic nuclear missiles and huge arsenals of various weapons. Belarus automatically gained the status of the most militarised state in the East European region. For that reason, the country began creating its national military by reducing the numbers of military units and weapons.

In accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, from 1992 onwards Belarus liquidated over 1,800 tanks, 1,500 armoured cars and 130 military aircraft.[3]

In addition, led by its publicly declared intention to achieve a non-nuclear status, on 26 November, 1996 the Republic of Belarus fulfilled ahead of schedule its obligations to withdraw Russian strategic forces from its territory. At the OSCE summit in Lisbon, Belarus came up with a proposal to create a nuclear-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe.

By 2000, the Belarusian military had a staff of a bit more than 100,000, including over 80,000 military men. The army consisted of three types of forces, namely land forces, air force and air defence, as well as formations, military units and structures that were subordinated directly to the Centre and did not belong to any type of military forces.

At the early stage of state sovereignty, Belarus officially took a position of neutrality and non-alignment. The status was consolidated by the country's

[3] Source: the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Belarus (www.mod.mil.by).

Constitution, adopted in March 1994. The legislation forbade the Belarusian Army to take part in military operations abroad.

After Aliaksndr Lukašenka was elected president in 1994, Belarus staked its future on speedy integration with Russia and establishing a union state, which also included its military component. Ever since, Belarus's neutral status has no longer been in line with the Belarusian government's international policies, so it has ceased to be mentioned and the country accepted security guaranty from the Russian Federation.

Belarus belongs to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), which positions itself as a regional security organisation, which is an alternative to NATO. In order to join their forces in providing regional security, Belarus and Russia took a decision to set up a joint regional group of the Belarusian and Russian military. In October 1999, Ministers of Defence of both countries signed an agreement on creating such a group in the west.

The legislation providing for Belarus – Russia military co-operation consists of a whole corpus of documents, the principal ones being the Treaty between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation on Military Co-operation, the Belarus – Russia Agreement on Joint Efforts to Provide Security in the Battlefield, the Concept of Belarus-Russia Joint Defence Policies, the Security Concept of the Belarus-Russia Union and the Military Doctrine of the Union State.

In 2009, the two countries completed long negotiations that lasted for years upon creation of a Belarus-Russia joint regional air defence system and signed a bilateral agreement on the matter. Belarus also joined the agreement on creating collective crisis response forces within the CSTO framework.

Defence Concepts and Visions of Threats

Although Belarus has a security guaranty from Russia, it does not make haste to abandon territorial defence and form expedition corps instead of conventional military forces. Probably the reason is that the Belarusian leadership does not see Russia as a dependable defence or the only permanent ally. In this case Belarus, like Great Britain centuries ago, has permanent interests rather than permanent allies. This accounts for the intention to strengthen the effective military forces in all dimensions instead of specialising in certain areas of defence.

Belarusian military experts may recognise that the strategic situation in Europe has changed dramatically, but giving up containment strategy or all-embracing defence is not yet on the agenda. Belarus's self-isolation and its political collisions both with the West and the Russian ally do not add to the Belarusian government's sense of security. Besides, their memories of the events in former Yugoslavia and Iraq and their ex-leaders' fates are fresh enough to influence their assessment of threats and possible responses.

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Thus, the Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus, adopted in July 2001, unequivocally speaks about an actual military threat posed by "*certain states (coalitions of states) that try to resolve international problems by means of [...] military force*" (The Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus). The Concept goes on to clarify which exactly states and coalitions are referred to, "*NATO's eastward enlargement, the new strategic concept declared by the North Atlantic Treaty that allows for the use of military forces without sanctions of the UN or the OSCE, establishment of the EU Rapid Reaction Forces [...] have made the military and political position of the Republic of Belarus considerably more complicated*" (The Concept…). In other words, the Concept does not only declare the presence of a military threat but also states its source quite precisely.

The Military Doctrine of Belarus, adopted in 2002, in its assessment of the military and political situation pointed out the lack of effective tools to prevent a military threat and defend the interests of all the actors of international relations in Europe. The Military Doctrine named "*intervention into domestic affairs of the Republic of Belarus, attempts at infringing on its interests in solving international security problems, enlargement of military blocs and alliances at the expense of military security of the Republic of Belarus and counteraction to collective security systems that the Republic of Belarus belongs to*" (The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Belarus) as main external threats to the country's military security. In other words, just like the Concept of National Security, the Military Doctrine declares that there is a military threat posed to the Republic of Belarus.

Military Reform in Belarus

Military priorities proceed from this assessment of threats and strategic situation. In November 2001, the Belarusian president authorised the Concept of Development of the Military Forces of the Republic of Belarus until 2010, the Programme to Complete the Reform of the Military in 2001–2005 and the plan of their development until 2006.

According to these documents, the purpose of the military reform was to bring the army in sync with the present military and political situation, the nature of modern warfare and military combat, the degree of possible military threats and the country's economic potential.

Towards this aim, the military reform included the following dimensions: a strategic containment system was to be created, the command system was to be enhanced, the structure of the Belarusian Army was to be optimised, an information support system was to be established and the practice of bringing the troops up to strength was to be improved.

In order to find the necessary resources to modernise the army, it was decided to reduce the military to a considerable extent, maintaining the same funding.

As a result, by 2006 the Belarusian military was 65,000 strong, including about 50,000 military staff and 15,000 civilian support staff with 1.4% of GDP allotted to the military budget.[4]

It can be argued that at present the Belarusian military has in general shifted to the European recruitment model, undergone a profound reform, military equipment has been modernised and a number of automated command systems have been set up.

Co-Operation with NATO

Apart from implementing the military reform, Belarus demonstrates its intention to participate in peacekeeping actions. In 2002 – 2003, Belarusian Parliament passed a number of laws to regulate the issues of sending Belarusian troops to take part in peacekeeping actions. Proceeding from these pieces of legislation, the Belarusian Council of Ministers passed its resolutions and the Minister of Defence issued orders that shaped the peacekeeping contingent and peacekeeping support staff training system (The Law of the Republic of Belarus…).

Belarus takes part in the *Partnership for Peace* (PfP) NATO programme, which enables the Belarusian Minister of Defence and Head of the General Staff to participate in meetings of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council on a regular basis. Since 2003, heads of the rear and armament HQs have been taking part in conferences of NATO national directors for armaments and heads of procurement. Representatives of the Belarusian military take part in NATO committees for air defence and air traffic management on a regular basis. These events for the most part consist of language courses for military men, special training, participation in the PfP workshops and exercises.

In 2005, it was the first time a Belarusian military unit had participated in a PfP tactical exercise, where it was submitted to NATO operational command. Considering that in 2002 to 2004 the parliament adopted pieces of legislation that set the procedure for the Belarusian military's participation in peacekeeping operations, it can be expected that in the future Belarus will take a more active part in NATO and PfP exercises.

When Belarus joined the planning and force assessment process aimed at achieving operational compatibility with joint NATO forces, it was an important landmark in Belarus – NATO co-operation.

Thus, co-operation with NATO is growing year by year, which does not go well, however, with the state propaganda machine that presents NATO to

[4] Source: the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Belarus.

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the audiences inside the country as an aggressive military bloc which intends to change the government in peaceful Belarus the way it did in Yugoslavia. In our opinion, there are several reasons for that. Firstly, the leadership of an authoritarian state like Belarus has to maintain a certain level of consolidation in the society and discipline, as well as justify infringements on civil liberties, which would be impossible without producing an image of an external enemy. Secondly, the anti-NATO rhetoric is a tribute to Belarus's alliance with Russia. Limitations imposed by the diplomatic etiquette and a great power status do not allow Russian leaders to say in person things that their Belarusian counterparts can say. By criticising its nominal ally's enemy, the Belarusian regime performs its duty as an ally of Russia, which, however, does not prevent it from taking an active part in PfP or promoting bilateral contacts with NATO.

Belarus seems to think of NATO as plan B in case the Belarus-Russia alliance no longer meets Belarusian national interests, so that it can have another security guarantor. The Belarus – NATO relations are on the one hand a way of blackmailing Russia and an attempt to avoid the country's total isolation. The latter is particularly true because NATO is perhaps the only western institution that does not bother the Belarusian leadership with constant rebukes for human rights abuses or threatens to impose sanctions on Belarus.

To sum up, the two models of defence system development in Lithuania and Belarus demonstrate the ways in which the neighbouring countries that used to have similar starting points have taken totally different trajectories according to their different visions of the military and political situation and threat assessment. Having found itself in international isolation, Belarus is forced to hold on to the old containment concept, further developing all types of its military forces in order to be able to withstand a possible invasion. Strategically, such a line of conduct can hardly be recognised as reasonable for a small European state situated between two major geopolitical centres, even though it may cherish someone's feeling of self-importance.

In our opinion, the Republic of Lithuania has given an example of a more effective and strategically well-grounded adaptation to the existing reality of European security. Its experience is worth studying more carefully, for sooner or later Belarus is bound to abandon its line of conduct and follow in its neighbour's footsteps to NATO and the EU.

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WHO HAS BENEFITED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY IN BELARUS?

Introduction

Since the establishment of the authoritarian regime of Lukašenka's rule in 1996, Belarus's political relations with the EU have constantly been deteriorating. Negotiations with Belarus on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) were completed in 1995, but the ratification of the PCA and the Interim Trade Agreement has stopped since 1997. The legal foundations of EU-Belarus relations so far have only been covered by the 1989 Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the 1993 bilateral Agreement on Trade in Textile Products. Due to human rights and democracy standards violations, a range of sanctions was introduced with regard to Belarus in 1996-2004: contacts at the ministerial level were stopped in 1996, and in 2002 the visa ban on Belarus's leadership was imposed. The visa ban blacklist had constantly been widening and reached 37 persons in 2006.

In 2002-2003, there were some attempts of a step-by-step normalization of relations with Belarus in response to improvements in the protection of democratic principles and human rights (the so-called "benchmarks approach") (Chronology of bilateral…). However, these steps had not had any significant results. On the eve of the ENP announcement, the European Parliament in its Resolution of 11 February 2003, called for moving towards a future partnership with Belarus, expressed strong concern over the increasing "self isolation" of Belarus (European Parliament resolution, 2002). The resolution also underlined the need for the EU to develop a strategy within the European Neighbourhood Policy framework, to provide greater financial support to NGOs working to strengthen civil society and independent media, and to enhance cooperation in the field of Justice and Home Affairs.

The ENP programme documents mentioned Belarus, but did not provide "a clear strategy" for its engagement (Vysotskaya A. et al., 2008). The Commission Communication on "Wider Europe – New Neighbourhood" 2003 stressed only that "*the EU faces a choice over Belarus: either to leave things to drift – a policy for which the people of Belarus may pay dear and one which prevents the EU from pursuing increased cooperation on issues of mutual interest – or to engage, and risk sending a signal of support for policies which do*

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not conform to EU values" and proposed to "*engage Belarus in a measurable, step-by-step process focused on creating the conditions for free and fair elections and, once achieved, the integration of Belarus into the neighbourhood policy*"(European Commission, 2003: 15).

The EU approach toward Belarus is more clearly highlighted in the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) Conclusions. GAERC of November 2004 proposed two tracks of relations: (i) restrictions on political contacts, all the contacts were established through the Presidency, SG/HR, the Commission and the Troika and (ii) assistance to support the needs of the population and democratization process "*by humanitarian, regional, cross-border cooperation and by projects supporting directly or indirectly democratization and democratic forces in Belarus*" (ENPI. Belarus). This approach was reaffirmed by the GAERC conclusions of 7 November 2005, which were supplemented by statements of *its "willingness to engage with Belarusian officials" and the need to "promote shared democratic values between the people of the EU and Belarus by intensifying people-to-people contacts and by strengthening good neighbourly relations across borders*". In reality, however, this meant that a third track also existed: technical assistance and expert cooperation that developed despite the lack of improvements in democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The EU constantly supported contacts with Belarusian authorities in such sectors as border management, fight against the trafficking of drugs and human beings, cooperation on assistance for Chernobyl-affected areas.

Although the European Neighbourhood Policy has covered Belarus, no Action Plan for the country has been envisaged. Instead of bilateral Action Plans, the Commission has elaborated a Country Strategy Paper and a National Indicative Programme (NIP) on unilateral basis. Country Strategy Papers (2005-2006 and 2007-2013) have directed allocation of technical assistance to Belarus under TACIS and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Belarus has had limited but still level of participation in the Neighbourhood Policy. ENP influenced Belarus to some extent and there were "winners" and "losers" of such an influence and ENP itself could be successful or unsuccessful in achieving its objectives in Belarus. It is possible to say that ENP in respect of Belarus was more or less successful in promoting security and stability and totally failed in its democratization ambitions. Paradoxically, it appears that the main Belarusian ENP "winner" is the undemocratic state and the main "loser" is the democratic civil society. This paper examines the courses of such results.

Political Placebo

As Michael Emerson argued in his 2004 paper that ENP had a potential to be a comprehensive and integrative policy of the EU, but at the same time,

there were threats of turning it into just a placebo (Emerson, 2004). In the case of Belarus, it was more a placebo than an attractive policy. Despite all the steps of the EU, the political situation in Belarus was deteriorating and EU-Belarus relations on political level collapsed. The responsibility for such a minor size of relations and cooperation with Europe is primarily on the Belarusian regime. And this is certainly correct. However, in all bilateral and multilateral relations, the responsibility is still to some extent shared between all parties and it cannot be said that the EU and member states were very active in the normalization of Belarusian-European relations.

Moreover, this low activity has a very simple explanation. Since the early 1990s, Germany (openly) and other EU countries (in a more veiled form) recognized Belarus as a sphere of Russia's interests. This recognition was the essence of the doctrine that guided the European Union until 2008-2009. It was believed that even the spread of democracy and market economy in Belarus could be carried out by Russia or through Russia's mediation. The dominance of such a doctrine immersed Belarus in the context of Russian foreign policy more and more, and the Belarusian economy was tied to the Russian one. If during president Yeltsin's period this doctrine had at least some reason, in the last decade, it reposed solely on the inertia of political thinking and bureaucratic institutions.[2]

Until last years, political relations with the EU, due to this doctrine domination, were limited to statements, resolutions, nominations of mutual claims and complaints. The majority of the EU political actions had a declarative and symbolical character. The implemented visa ban and the freezing of accounts of the Belarusian leaders (2006) were no more than an indicator of the fact that the EU had no other essential tools of influence at that moment. These measures had a dual character as they limited possibilities of communication not only for Belarus, but also with Belarus. Nonetheless, the EU did not see any other political subjects for communications. The Belarusian government remained the main vis-à-vis to the European Union. Addressed as if to the people of Belarus, the Commission's 2006 Non-Paper turned exclusively to the Belarusian political regime, and only its actions or inactions were considered as grounds for the EU policy changes.

Recognizing that "the people of Belarus are the first victims of the isolation" (European Commission Non-Paper, 2006), Non-Paper did not propose any clearly defined strategy for the Belarusian civil society. And it de-motivated the pro-European oriented civil society to a large extent. In 2008-2009, the shortage of channels of communications created a problem for the EU as the inclusion of Belarus in the initiative of the Eastern Partnership demanded a renewal of contacts. In October 2008, after the minimal and symbolical liberalization steps of the Belarusian regime, the Council of European Union

[2] See more in (Matskevich Ul., 2008).

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made a decision to freeze the sanctions, which marked a new period in the relations of Belarus and the EU (Council of European Union, 2008).

The 2008 thaw of Belarus-EU relations was not caused by any essential actions of both parties. Neither Belarus, nor Europe did anything that could make any of the parties to change the usual tactics of actions concerning the other party. It is necessary to assume that the reason for the thaw was not in actions and events, but in the change of relations themselves. It is possible to say that the relations changed owing to their own immanent dynamics. It is impossible to infinitely stay in the condition of a cold war and alienation. The situation had to change one day under the influence of internal reasons. Actually, this immanent dynamics is the main reason of the thaw of the Belarusian-European relations in 2008 (Matskevich Ul., 2009). The relations returned again to a zero point, which is an indirect recognition of the fact that the previous policy of the EU concerning Belarus and the policy of self-isolation of the Belarusian regime had exhausted themselves, having brought no real advantages to any of the parties.

EU Assistance to Belarus: Technical Cooperation vs. Democracy Support

Despite the political level tensions, EU technical assistance to Belarus remains considerable. According to the National Coordinating Unit of the TACIS Program in Belarus, "the estimated volume of EU technical assistance to Belarus from 1991 to 2006 totals 216 million euros, or more than 40% of all the technical assistance provided to Belarus. This makes the EU the single largest donor of assistance to this country" (National Coordinating Unit). Since 2005, the EU assistance to Belarus has been provided through the Neighbourhood Programme (TACIS and, since 2007, ENPI). The TACIS programme 2005-2006 (totaled € 10 million) focused on "*support for institutional, legal and administrative reform*", including support to civil society, education and training, and "*support in addressing the social consequences of transition*", mainly addressing the Chernobyl consequences (Country Strategy Paper…, 2004). The majority of 2005-2006 projects, "however, have prioritized border management (customs control/border crossings) financed under regional and cross-border programme headings" (Vysotskaya A. et al., 2008). About € 13,3 million was spent on Enhancing Border Management in the Republic of Belarus (projects BOMBEL 1, 2005-2006 and BOMBEL 2, 2006-2007) (Porogramme for the Prevention…).

The Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for Belarus for 2007-2013 highlight the two priority areas of "Social and Economic Development" and "Democratic Development and Good Governance". The financing distribution makes it obvious that the priority among these two areas is given to social and economic development — 70% of allocations. Support for

democratic development, which "*comprises almost exclusively the exchange of students, teachers and business partners, as well as capacity-building support for institutions at the level of the central government*" (Vysotskaya A. et al., 2008), gets only 30% of all allocations.

The Strategy Paper 2007-2013 stresses that "*despite the lack of progress in the areas of democratization, human rights, and respect for fundamental freedoms, it is in EU's strategic interest to continue assistance programmes in certain areas which require the assent of the Belarusian authorities*" (ENPI. Belarus). Assessing the previous period of cooperation, the Strategy Paper 2007-2013 admits "*the difficulty in delivering assistance to NGOs in Belarus*", and, "*by contrast, cooperation in sectors such as border management and the fight against the trafficking of drugs and human beings, as well as cooperation on assistance for Chernobyl-affected areas has proven successful*" and "*the Belarusian authorities are supportive of EC assistance in this area*". Within the scope of ENPI in 2007-2009, three large programmes for cooperation with the government in the field of energy, ecology, and food safety were launched; the total amount of financing of these programmes reaches 18,5 million euros.

It is possible to say that in the field of technical cooperation, the Belarusian state works quite successfully with the EU. However, the hopes that this technical cooperation can lead to political changes are naïve.[3] The point is not in limiting or freezing such cooperation. It is not possible and it is useless. The question is in the form of rendering such technical help. Today, the projects which are being carried out in Belarus within the scope of technical cooperation are not transparent and are not open. Belarus's civil society has no information on the course and real results of such cooperation. The total majority of public organizations included in such projects are GONGOs which are not independent from the state.

It is paradoxical, but in the field of democracy support, the EU was much less successful than in the field of technical cooperation. The most considerable means have been allocated for projects to support education and independent mass media. In 2005-2008, about 7,5 million euros were spent to support the European Humanities University which is situated outside Belarus. The return from the investment of these means is very low, considering the fact that the EHU graduates, receiving European-standard diplomas (not Belarusian ones), not always can find a job in Belarus and will often emigrate to the West ("Prague accent", 2007). The same situation is with the independent mass media.

[3] Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner in January 2008 assumes that : "The holding of technical meetings between experts of both sides could lay the ground for substantial cooperation in the framework of a full partnership, provided that Belarus takes steps toward democratization" (European Commission, Belarus, 2008).

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The television channel RTVI allocated about 2 million euros to create a special weekly programme for Belarus, which, according to sociological polls, is watched by less than 6% of Belarusians (IISEPS, 2009). Direct support of the activity of the civil society was carried out only within the scope of the programmes of the Decentralized cooperation, the Non-state Actors and Local Authorities programme (NSA-LA) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In 2005-2009, the volume of support was about 7 million euros, which is much less than the volumes of means used by the state bodies.

The Belarusian regime is very successful in blocking support for civil society organizations. Several strategies are used for this purpose - complication of the order of reception of help and replacement of real organizations of citizens by state-run public organizations (GONGOs). Since 2002, the financial conditions of reception of means for the EU programmes in Belarus are so rigid and difficult from a procedural point of view that civil society organizations prefer to use the means of the EU programmes illegally. The legal registration of grants includes a long procedure of coordination with a profile ministry, receptions of proofs from KGB that the project does not threaten national safety, solution of the tax exemption issue with the Ministry of Taxes; the means are to be received through the Department on Humanitarian Activity of the President of Belarus. And even in the case of registration of a project, CSOs are not relieved of possible consequences in the form of law suits. Thus, the Ministry of Taxes once demanded several organizations which worked with TACIS programmes, to pay taxes in spite of the fact that, according to the international agreement between the government of Belarus and the EU, projects of international technical help are exempt from tax payments (BHC Successful…, 2004).

A separate problem is the replacement of real civil society organizations by colourable public structures. Last initiative of the head of the Administration of the President, Uladzimir Makiej, was an attempt to replace the delegation of civil society of Belarus at the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership with representatives of the Public Advisory Council of the Administration of the President (Civil Society Forum, 2010). Today in Belarus, there is a process of creation of public councils of the branch ministries, which should show the presence of interaction with civil society. In these cases, the European Commission should distinguish very accurately between real civil society and its simulation in the form of GONGOs. A way to distinguish it can be a degree of openness of the activity of such public structures and principles of their formation.

The Belarusian oppositional forces have also got some support from the EU. The EU member states and the USA supported political campaigns inside Belarus and political parties' leaders were invited to the meetings

with EU representatives; in 2006, Belarusian oppositional leader Aliaksandr Milinkievič was awarded the Andrei Sakharov prize by the European Parliament. However, since the unsuccessful efforts of the OSCE observation mission to organize a political dialog between Lukašenka and the opposition in 1999, the latter had lost any political influence on the situation in the country. Political parties and their coalitions in fact did not differ from the rest of civil society neither in their functions, nor in the political weight. Direct EU and US political support of the opposition could not bring any effect, but only created dividing lines inside independent Belarusian society by favouring more political opposition than civil society.

The Eastern Partnership: a First Step for the Better

On the eve of the announcement of the Eastern Partnership, Belarus made a number of symbolical steps towards liberalization of its political regime. In many respects, it was caused by a worsening dynamics of political and economic relations with Russia after the 2007 crisis. Belarusian regime took a step to update its relations with the EU. In 2008, political prisoners were freed, two independent newspapers were allowed to be sold publicly, and the oppositional "Movement For Freedom!" was registered. It allowed the EU to start a thaw of relations, to introduce a temporary moratorium on sanctions concerning the higher officials, and to carry out several summits; participation in the initiative of the Eastern Partnership was offered to Belarus.

The Eastern Partnership has declared a possibility of participation of Belarus, having made a remark that the "*level of Belarus's participation in the Eastern Partnership will depend on the general process of relations between the EU and this country*" (Communication from the Commission, 2008). It has actually meant an exception of Belarus from the bilateral component of cooperation, but has given it a place in the structure of multilateral interaction of the Eastern Partnership. For the government, it pragmatically meant that Belarus can keep developing the component of technical interstate cooperation. Understanding the quite concrete benefits of reception of the means of the European programmes for the implementation of projects in the sphere of economy, transport, and energy, the government of Belarus is still not interested in any democratic transformations, the price of which looks too high for Belarus's leaders.

The transformational potential of the Eastern Partnership lies in the correction of approaches and bases of the ENP. The conditional approach should not be cancelled, but, at least, added with an "instrumental" approach. The Eastern Partnership should be considered not as a certain sort of an award for the steps the countries make to reform their political and economic systems according to the European standard, but a tool of their long-term transformation. It replaces the EU policy of reaction on positive (e.g. colour revolutions)

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or negative events (e.g. the Russian-Georgian war) with a more pro-active approach of the EU to its eastern neighbours.

The European Union should pay attention to the long-term processes and the political and social forces in the neighbouring countries, which will involve more and more countries in the general space of Europe. In the relation of the enlargement policy, there was the "push" principle, when the countries of Eastern Europe pushed themselves towards the EU, leaving their communistic past behind. For the Eastern Partnership, there is a need in the "pull" principle, i.e. to attract the countries of the region to the space of the European norms and standards through cooperation with active promoters of Europeanization inside the countries.

Potential possibilities of democratization and Europeanization of Belarus are in the expansion of participation of civil society in the Eastern Partnership and its further strengthening. Only pro-European-oriented civil society is capable to prevent simulation of reforms by the government of Belarus. However, it takes an inclusion of a component of civil society in the political level of cooperation of Belarus and the EU. It means that civil society should become, in a long term, a third participant in setting priorities and implementation of concrete projects of this cooperation. In particular, according to Štefan Füle, a draft plan of interaction of Belarus and the EU (Joint Interim Plan), which has been developed by the Commission since autumn 2010, should be coordinated not only with the government of Belarus, but also with structures of civil society. Civil society should also receive a comprehended and institutionally fixed place for monitoring and evaluation of changes within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Development of the civil society component in the Eastern Partnership in the form of the Civil Society Forum looks promising, but meanwhile all these mechanisms remain mostly potential. The real place of civil society remains uncertain. The role that is supposed to be carried out by civil society, i.e. monitoring and control of the national governments, does not possess any obvious mechanisms of implementation. The Civil Society Forum has limited information on projects of cooperation developed within the scope of the thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership, and has no sufficient level of financing even for support of work of its operating bodies (Steering Committee).

General Recommendations

It is possible to raise the efficiency of the tools of the ENP and EaP concerning Belarus if the component building democracy and developing civil society is strengthened. Several steps for this purpose can be outlined:

Introduction of mechanisms of internal monitoring of the progress of the Eastern Partnership in the achievement of the purposes of rapprochement

of the eastern neighbouring countries with the EU (multilateral track monitoring). If the bilateral interaction of ENP gets into the monitoring sphere, then the multilateral interaction does not receive an appropriate estimation. More than a year has elapsed since the beginning of the Eastern Partnership, and nobody can accurately answer the question of how (to what degree) the eastern neighbouring countries have become closer to the EU. Today, the degree of their closeness to the EU is evaluated depending on the level of development of bilateral relations. However, it says nothing about the real state of affairs in concrete thematic areas such as education, culture, freedom of economic activities, and even respect of fundamental human rights. Can we say that Belarus is further from the EU standards than Ukraine in the sphere of education, poverty reduction, and regional development? Can we say that Belarus has reached smaller progress than Azerbaijan in the field of freedom of the mass media and respect of human rights? These questions have got no exact answers.

For the bilateral interaction in the ENP, the monitoring scheme is to be built in two stages: a preliminary evaluation through the ENP Country Report and an annual evaluation through Progress Reports, reflecting the execution of the ENP Action Plans. Civil society is included in the system of monitoring of the ENP Action Plans and has a possibility to make its own estimations through negotiations on the Action Plan, stakeholder implementation conferences, independent research institutes' analyses of the implementation of the ENP Action Plans, civil society contributions to European Commission on the ENP progress reports (Non – Paper, 2006; European Commission – External Relations). Such a system of monitoring does not exist for the multilateral interaction. In case of Belarus, the problem is also aggravated by the fact that the acceptance of the Action Plan is not provided for it. Accordingly, the European Commission makes only a unilateral estimation of the implementation of its strategy concerning Belarus. Both government and civil society are generally excluded from the monitoring system; their opinion is requested through consultations, but it is not obligatory taken into account when decisions are made.

A prototype of the EaP monitoring and coordination could be the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), which is used in the EU in social and economic policy and has already shown its efficiency as a means of a coordinated movement of various actors to common social and political standards and reference points without unification. The idea of this method is in regulating and directing the process of solving joint social and political problems (unemployment, poverty reduction, harmonization of education systems, etc.) not via strict and centralized requirements but through creating a joint monitoring system. Through the mechanisms of the EaP Civil Society Forum, civil society must receive possibilities to carry out an alternative evaluation

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of the implementation of multilateral cooperation. These estimations should be obligatory taken into account when strategic directions of cooperation are defined; the CS Forum should receive the right of reception of written answers to its letters of inquiry to thematic platforms and other structures of the Eastern Partnership.

The European Commission and the European Council should call the EU member states for a deeper involvement in the processes of the Eastern Partnership. In particular, coordination of the strategy of financial help of separate EU countries in the field of democratization and support of the countries of the region of the Eastern Partnership could be such a step.

The EU member-countries have different enough and not always constant interests in the eastern direction of ENP. If during its presidency in the EU, the Czech Republic was active enough, then during 2010 it shows much smaller interest in the EaP. Sweden and Poland remain the basic promoters of the Eastern Partnership, however their purposes and support strategies can be rather various. If Sweden is active enough in involving Belarusian civil society organizations into definition of strategic priorities of their programmes and their implementation, the Polish strategy is focused more likely on support of the organizations which are based in Poland and work with Belarus. Coordination of the policies of the countries-partners can be reached by means of the following mechanisms:

a) Country-to-country consultations. The European Commission can gather representatives of the interested member-countries on a regular basis (1-2 times per year) for coordination of their policies towards separate countries of the Eastern Partnership and towards the initiative as a whole. An approach on division of responsibility of separate countries for development of separate spheres (support of the independent media, rights of minorities, local development, etc.) can be productive.

b) Coordination of the donor policy. For coordination of financial assistance, the consultations should include not only the state structures, but also the financial organizations (World Bank, European Reconstruction and Development Bank, European Investment Bank), international organizations (Council of Europe, OSCE, UN, ILO), independent donors (Soros Fundation, Marshal Fundation, etc.). Consultations of donor structures should provide coordination of policies not only with each other (as it happens now), but also include the governments and civil society of the countries-recepients of the help in the consultations.

c) Creation of a voluntary fund to support initiatives of the Eastern Partnership. A number of fruitful undertakings of the Eastern Partnership do not undergo their development because of the general shortage

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of financial means. In particular, the multilateral interaction of civil society has no sufficient support. Actually, the expenses for only single annual meetings of the Forum and its four working groups (5 meetings per year) are covered from the EU budget. It is obviously not enough for a high-grade building of cooperation. The means of the voluntary support fund could finance the work of the Civil Society Forum Steering Committee, as well as initiatives of horizontal cooperation between civil societies of the countries-partners and the EU countries — meetings of independent experts, support of initiatives on monitoring of the progress of the EaP by civil society organizations, joint researches, exchange of the best practices, involvement of civil society into the solution of conflicts, etc.

Financial tools of EU (ENPI) should be balanced in order to increase the assistance of democracy and development of civil society. Today, the EU programmes work to support civil society and democracy only to a limited degree. For a bigger efficiency of the programmes, it is necessary not only to equal the quantity of means allocated for the issues of technical cooperation with the state, but also to introduce mechanisms providing their bigger flexibility and adequacy to the country's specificity. The programmes of democracy development will not be effective while civil society of Belarus is in isolation. In its present marginalized condition, it cannot solve and will not be able to solve the tasks of its own development, advancement of democracy and European values. To settle this matter, it is necessary:

a) To develop and accept a frame document which would normalize and regulate partner interaction (dialog) of the European structures, donors, and institutions of civil society with the Belarusian state and structures of civil society. In this process, the Parisian declaration The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) can be used as a prototype, but with obligatory participation of not only the governments, but also institutions of civil society. Exclusion of civil society from the system of definition of priorities, implementation, or monitoring of assistance programmes allows the state to easily feign the development of democracy and dialogue with civil society.

b) For implementation of such a dialog, to organize a constantly working joint body (for example, the Social Council, Round Table, etc.) with its special expert groups, which would have the powers to implement organizational, methodical, legal, and evaluation functions and which would promote the development of partnership of Belarus and the European Union. Participation of such a joint body is necessary

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at all development cycles of European programmes: from analysis of the situation and formation of a plan to estimation of productivity and efficiency monitoring at all levels of inter-institutional interactions. Organization of such a body is expedient within the scope of functioning structures of the EaP Civil Society Forum; it is also possible in the form of the creation of Belarus-EU standing committee.

c) To sign an intergovernmental Memorandum of registration of the EU integrated international programmes on the territory of Belarus in order to eliminate the necessity of registration of separate projects within the scope of these programmes, thus implementing in practice a notifying principle of registration instead of the allowing one which is applied now.

To support the activity and initiatives of the CS Forum of the Eastern Partnership and its constant working bodies organizationally, infrastructurally, and financially. In particular:

a) To promote the organization of regular meetings of the Coordinating Committee (CSF Steering Committee) and working groups of CSF and to provide financial support to their technical (executive, secretarial, organizational) activities.

b) To spur the launch of the work of multilateral thematic expert working groups which are to develop substantial offers and concepts for the thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership and the Civil Society Forum.

c) To expand contacts and interaction of the EU official structures with the National platform of the EaP CSF, in particular - to promote the expansion of contacts of the diplomatic corps with representatives of the National platform, possibly through the appointment of representatives for cooperation with Belarusian civil society in both the European Union and its member states.

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REVIEWS

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CRISIS OF BELARUSIAN STUDIES

Bekus Nelly (2010). Struggle over Identity. The Official and the Alternative "Belarusianness". Budapest. Central European University

It has long been noted that Belarus is not a subject of special interest to either Europe or the rest of the world. The interest is of course declared, as ignoring a country located in direct proximity to the European Union does not seem very politically correct. But this interest is nominal, as it is displayed rather through admiring the wild exoticism of the "last dictatorship in Europe" than through trying to give the Belarusian issue an intellectual and strategic treatment. A good example of this is a virtually complete lack of academic and expert circles outside Belarus which would engage in Belarusian studies. It would take two minutes to enumerate all the specialists in the subject of Belarus, and most of them are dealing with our country as a supplement to the subject of Ukraine. Our country is, indeed, the "heart of darkness" amidst the European continent: it is better to forget its terrible irrationality, or just wait until Russia finally regains its abandoned province.

Typically, it is emigrants who are trying to set right such an asymmetry of interest, which is characteristic not only of Belarus but also of other "post-colonial" countries. We mean the people who left their homeland but remember it well – the ones who entered the Western academic environment where they need to find their own niche. No one would expect any theoretical and methodological innovations from such outcasts, but there really exists an interest in exclusive information about the godforsaken places. Sometimes the emigrees manage to institutionalize their specific knowledge, a good example of which can be our southern neighbours who managed to create two major academic centers even during Soviet times: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (founded in 1973) and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta (founded in 1976). Belarusians cannot boast anything of the kind. Therefore, every new book about Belarus published in English even comes as some surprise.

One can only rejoice about publication of Nelly Bekus's (Neli Biekus) "Struggle over Identity" in a fairly prestigious publishing house of the Central

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European University (Budapest, Hungary). Interestingly, the author's biography reflects the abovementioned career trajectory of an emigrant scholar. Sometimes Nelly Bekus calls herself a Belarusian author, but she has long been living and working in Warsaw (since 1999). Such position provides opportunities for enhanced competence: besides having first-hand knowledge of the Belarusian context, it is possible to have access to the current trends of Polish and Western science.

Surely, this fact sets higher standards for text, forcing a scholar to give it a more serious treatment. Moreover, the introduction to the book begins with a rigid statement on the issues of the Belarusian post-communism transformation studies, namely the predominance of several "basic truths" that are becoming more and more self-sufficient. One of these axiomatic truths, according to Nelly Bekus, is the assertion that the weakness of Belarusian national identity stimulates the Belarusian authoritarian regime. Indeed, one cannot but agree with admitting the crisis in the Belarusian identity studies which are becoming more and more banal and stereotyped, less and less capable of explaining anything. On the other hand, such a claim at the beginning of the book sets the standard on what is to be expected from its content. Unwittingly, one can anticipate a critical revision of the current Belarusian situation descriptions, and formulation of some new conceptual approaches.

But as early as in two paragraphs the alert reader will be disappointed. "*The aim of this work is to present post-communist Belarus as a public and cultural space where the 'struggle over identity' between the official and the oppositional discourses takes place and where both discourses claim their right to be the only voice of genuine Belarusianness*" (p. 4). That is, in fact, this book is a deployment of another "axiomatic truth" that prevails in many other publications of both Belarusian and Western authors. I will not stop at this point but will try to search through these pages for some golden bits of sense.

The proposed structure of the book does not seem too successful either. It begins by describing the features of the triple (political, economic and civic) transformation of post-communist Belarus. In the second chapter, the author turns to theory and examines the current approaches to the study of nation and nationalism. In the same chapter, she also examines the history of Belarusian nationalism, paying particular attention to the national revival at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries and the formation of the Belarusian identity during the Soviet times. In the third and final chapter, she comes back to modernity again and describes the struggle between the two discourses for the hegemony over the Belarusianness concept. Such leaps (modernity-theory-history-modernity) are rather confusing, and a deviation from the classical structure (theory-methodology-history-modernity) can hardly be considered reasonable.

So the book begins with description of the latest history of Belarus. Despite the critical message implied at the beginning of the preface, Nelly Bekus

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creates her text utilizing a strategy of polyphonic narrative. The story of how Lukašenka came to power and established an authoritarian political regime is presented as one consistent story where voices of different authors are entwined. While writing the first chapter, Nelly Bekus herself assumes the position of a meta-observer who faces the reality only through mediated texts (at best through opinion polls results). Therefore Lukašenka's coming to power, the essence of the Belarusian political regime or particularities of the post-communist transformation are presented not as a personal experience and its comprehension, but as a result of compilation of various analytical literature and consolidation of segmental positions and statements by other authors into a single text. Again, such approach is virtually a denial of the aims of a critical review of the field of Belarusian studies. Instead of contextualizing the knowledge about our country, showing conditionality of interpretations and seeking abruptions in the integrity of representations, the author of "Struggle over Identity" is simply putting her text together from different pieces. The list of different "labels" of the Belarusian regime – be it "super-presidency" or "neo-communism", "sultanism", or "lukashenkism" – resembles cataloguing various views that have no essential contradictions between themselves but are describing one and the same thing just in different words, which eventually leads to simplification of reality that has been clear a priori.

In her analysis of the post-communist transformation, Nelly Bekus refers to an already classical scheme of transition, which includes the processes of democratization of the political system, market reforms in economy and establishment of civil society. Obviously, the Belarusian case by no means fits in the Procrustean bed of transitology. So the presented criticism of this paradigm by Christian W. Haerpfer sounds quite reasonable: as an alternative, he suggests the "transformation approach", which renounces any predefined aims for the process of changes. But the declarative agreement with such an approach is undermined by the description of the triple transformation per se - the description made in accordance with the standards of transitology where the aims are strictly defined.

Thus, the Belarusian political system formation is described by the author as destruction of democratic principles and concentration of power in the presidential hands, which, again, is understood as deviation from the "ideal" line of democratization. Economic development of Belarus, though, is presented more ambivalently, since the lack of necessary market reforms is accompanied by economic stability and even development, albeit this "economic miracle" is again explained by a banal version of dependence on Russia's support. And finally, the development of civil society is described as a repressive process of ousting non-governmental organizations from the public sphere into the parallel world "outside the power".

Although, as already mentioned, the body of literature on Belarus is not that big, but exactly these themes are analysed quite in detail. Fortunately,

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the author of the book is not limited to an ordinary description of these well-known processes, but tries to go further and seeks prerequisites for establishing authoritarianism. Understanding our country as some sort of a special exception to general processes, which is most common for the western analytics, also requires searching for some specific complex of reasons for such a unique path. It is clear that some of the reasons listed by Bekus (failure of the democratic movement of the late-perestroika period to seize the power or lack of previous democratic statehood) are widespread in the region and can hardly explain exclusiveness and exclusion of Belarus. Describing the positive experience of the Soviet times became one of the strongest arguments for the casus of Belarus, and this subject is specifically developed in the second chapter of the book.

Interestingly, the author is looking for prerequisites for democratization as well, while, once again, clearly having in mind the necessary and definite aim of post-communist transformation in Belarus. The results of a study on the index of democracy, conducted in 15 countries between 1991 and 1998 under the leadership of Christian Haerpfer,[2] come as one of the key moments for Nelly Bekus. According to the results, Belarusians – in their political preferences – are among the most "democratic" nations in Central-Eastern Europe, second only to Estonians.

The results of this study are very often mentioned in the book "Struggle over Identity", eventually making an impression that we are dealing not with a tendency fixed by sociologists at a certain period, but with a natural fact, with Belarusians' inherent characteristic. Different sociological information is widely used in the text in general, which is not surprising, since the author holds a PhD in Sociology. On the other hand, the manner of presentation of this information has certain flaws – primacy of synchronicity and neglect of the context. Results of surveys conducted at different times (and by different research institutes) are presented in the text in a mixed up manner, without any chronological connections, which sometimes creates an impression of some frozen image of Belarus, where nothing happens and nothing changes.[3]

[2] Christian W. (2002). Haerpfer. Democracy and Enlargement in Post-Communist Europe: The Democratization of the General Public in 15 Central and Eastern European Countries, 1991-1998. New York.

[3] A good example can be the section "National Pride and Paradoxes of Russification" (p. 65-71), which is highly charged with results of various sociological studies. The text consecutively provides data of different polls from 2005, 2001, 2005, 1995-1998, 2005, 1992-1993, 1996 - the materials of IISEPS, World Values Survey and Polish sociologists. Moreover, this section addresses only the issue of pride for the country among Belarusians, while paradoxes of Russification are covered in the next section "The Paradox of Political and Linguistic Russification", so there is an obvious problem with correlation between the name of this paragraph and its contents. As a more positive example of using sociological information we can recall the previous section "The Russian Factor in Belarusian Self-Perception", which really tracks the processes of changes, though in a typically "mixed" style.

That is, Nelly Bekus's style is to combine heterogeneous information into an externally homogeneous description, static and devoid of dynamics, which is a clear misrepresentation of methodological standards of social science. In addition, one can come across simply crude mistakes in the use of sociological data in the book. A figure of 58% of voters who voted for Lukašenka in 2006 (according to the results of IISEPS research) is presented on p. 4, while at the same time p. 21 provides the same information, but the figure is changed to 63%. Often results of sociological research are given in the text, but the year when it was conducted is omitted as unimportant information (i.e., one has to search for it in primary sources).

But let us return to the contents of the book. In my opinion, one of its most interesting parts is the section "Arguments and Paradoxes of Weak Belarusian Identity", where Nelly Bekus rightly and properly contests one of the "axiomatic truths" of Belarusian studies - that of success of the authoritarian regime as resulting from the weak national identity. Extensive use of sociological material allows to note three tendencies that undermine this trend:

1. gradual departure of the Belarusian population away from supporting the project of unification with Russia and comprehension of national independence as a value;
2. strengthening of civic identity and pride for the country among Belarusian nationals;
3. erroneousness of political and linguistic diversification of Belarusian space where Belarusian-speakers are associated with democratic opposition and Russian-speakers with supporters of Lukašenka.

Sociological data allow Bekus to rightly question conventional opinions about awkwardness and immaturity of Belarusian identity. But stating the most obvious facts undermining this theory does not affect the basis of such stereotypization of Belarus, enrooted in production of the dominant knowledge, where the aims and priorities are specified and anything that moves away from instructions is disgraced and stigmatized. But Nelly Bekus's attempt to challenge this not only outdated but also harmful scheme is in itself worth supporting.

In the second chapter, Nelly Bekus shifts from direct analysis of the situation in Belarus and tries, firstly, to determine theoretical approaches to nation and nationalism (although, again, it would have been better to do it at the beginning of the book). Since a large body of comprehensive works is dedicated to this topic, no special revelations should be expected from this part of the book. We will only note that the author narrows down the current understanding of nations and nationalism to two main approaches: modernist (E. Gellner, E. Hobsbawm) and ethno-symbolic (A. Smith, M. Hroch). While describing, in her opinion, the main two approaches, Nelly Bekus again shifts to her favourite position of a meta-observer who provides a set of

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different estimates but is incapable of choosing any particular approach to work with, due to her observer position. Hence we may naturally infer that for analysis of the Belarusian situation both modernist and ethno-symbolic approaches should be applied, as each of them has its own relevance.

In the second half of this chapter, the author tries to summarize the achievements of latest studies dedicated to implementation of the Soviet national policy. The fundamental revolution in the Soviet studies which was implemented over the past two decades and which is associated primarily with the names of American researchers T. Martin, R. Suny, and R. Brubaker,[4] becomes essential for the author's understanding of the development of Belarusian national identity. The Soviet Union is now predominantly depicted not as a repressive empire that brutally suppressed any national ambitions of the enslaved peoples, but as a state in which institutional preconditions for development of a spectrum of national identities were created, which finally provided adequate opportunities for foundation of national states.

In particular, this approach to the history of the BSSR has been utilized by Siarhiej Bohdan in his article, arguing that the Soviet national policy has greatly contributed to the development of Belarusianness, although, of course, reduced to the socialist ideology. Unfortunately, his article "BSSR and Belarusian nationalism" (*Perekriostki*, No. 1-2/2009) was published not so long ago, so Nelly Bekus could not use it, and her text looks more like a schematic retranslation of achievements of the pioneer authors onto the Belarusian material. On the other hand, conclusions like "*the whole period of the Soviet power can be considered a specific process of designing a Belarusian nation that was incorporated into the ideological framework of the Soviet regime*" (p. 133) still delivers a fresh breath in shedding the light on the period of the BSSR. Let us hope that the book "Struggle over Identity" will also contribute to the burning issue – revision of the history of the Soviet period, which for now is primarily defined in the rhetoric of struggle or apologetics, though time has come to look at this period more objectively.

And finally, the third chapter consists of the results of Nelly Bekus's own research, which gives a reader tired of retelling thoughts of other authors an opportunity to turn to original findings. Unfortunately, the author could not introduce anything qualitatively new to the state of Belarusian research. The main conceptual idea – that in today's Belarus two versions of the national idea (official and alternative) are fighting for cultural and political hegemony – is also obtaining the status of a dead "axiomatic truth". That significant change in conceptualization which Nelly Bekus lists as her own achievement, namely the fact that she replaces one national idea with two

[4] Terry Martin (2001). Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939. Cornell University Press; Ronald Suny (1998). The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States. Oxford University Press; Rogers Brubaker (1996). Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and nationalism in the New Europe. Cambridge University Press.

(i.e., attributing the official project also with a national status, which not all researchers do) has long been apparent.

Therefore, this book becomes a part of a series of numerous studies of Belarus where our country is described as a space divided between the opposite "discourses", each of which has its own logic, aims and values, practices and possibilities of institutional embodiment. This leads to an inevitable reduction of the complex reality, with a disregard to all the phenomena that exist "in between", with a tendency to ignore interactions and mutual influences, transfers and borrowings (but, as we remember, the author is prone to static images, so there is nothing to be surprised at).

Description of these two modes of national idea begins with a paraphrase of disputes between the official and alternative historiographies. Unfortunately, this is one more basic scheme which, in spite of being widely used by many respected authors (R. Lindner, H. Sahanovič, A. Smaliančuk, A. Katliarčuk), has clearly lost any heuristic relevance. In the description by Nelly Bekus, this obsolete scheme is even more primitivized and turned into a complete cliché, which furthermore provokes a number of reasonable doubts in terms of methodology. First of all, the criteria of distinguishing between the formal and alternative schools remain very blurred, and the reference to the fact that historians are divided by geopolitical orientations (some support the version of a positive Russian influence, while others controvert it) is absolutely insufficient to substantiate such division. In addition, the comparison is mainly based on texts written at different times and in different genres, which is incorrect. One gets the impression that the author tried to present two maximally different versions of Belarusian history, while historiography itself became the victim of purity of representation of this confrontation.

For example, Bekus stresses that the period of the Belarusian territory being part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is evaluated negatively in the official version of history, while "alternativists" view it in a positive way. Already judging by this thesis, any person who is more or less acquainted with the development and status of Belarusian historiography can understand the degree of simplification and distortion of the content of discussions and position formation. Naturally, it is impossible to describe historiography without the procedures of reduction, but in this case it leads to complete destruction of the essence.

Further, in the following section, the alternative project of the Belarusian nation splits into two movements. One of them is described as a "European" project which regards Belarus as a European country. Articulation of this project is based on several basic principles: the liberal-democratic interpretation of nation (a nation can only be built on democratic basis), vision of the Belarusian past as part of European history with common political and moral values, and geopolitical orientation towards the West. But Nelly Bekus does

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not stop at this and defines yet another version of alternative "Belarusianness" which is based on perception of Belarus as a country that does not belong either to the East or to the West. According to this interpretation, Belarus is at the crossroads of two civilizations, but does not completely belong to any of them and is doomed to look for its own way.

Such a division, in my opinion, looks artificial and objectionable. Already at the beginning, the researcher states that "*the two alternative concepts of Belarusianness not only do not contradict each other, but often join forces in their strive against the pro-Russianness dominating official culture and politics*" (p. 156). In fact, the rhetorical appeal to the "European" or "at the meeting point of civilizations" status of Belarus is not the grounds determining the differences in viewing the past, present and future of our country (and thus defining the political and cultural preferences). These two representations have already become standard clichés and can easily be substituted or even used together. And in this way they can be used with different political objectives, including some formulations of the state ideology. One can easily compile a set of quotations of Aliaksandr Lukašenka where he speaks about "Europeanness" of Belarus, or about our country being destined to link the West and the East. Consequently, we are dealing not with "discursive strategies" as Nelly Bekus tries to present it, but just with rhetorical figures.

Similarly, in the section dedicated to the Belarusian state ideology, the author tends to solidify the representation of the object which is eclectic and contradictory. Unfortunately, the origins of these contradictions are not presented, and neither are the ways of combination and the conflict of interests inherent in the project of creation of the state ideology. But the primacy of the idea of national independence laid in the foundation of this construct is emphasized quite fairly. That is why Nelly Bekus attributes the official ideology to national ideas, and in this we must agree with her.

Then, the author moves on to describe cultural manifestations of the "alternative" Belarusianness. Unfortunately, the initial approach of rigid confrontation of opposition versions plays its negative role here, as again, the metaphor of polarization denies any dynamics that still takes place in our country. For example, a movie by Andrej Kudzinienka "Mysteries. Occupation" is, according to Nelly Bekus, one of the manifestations of such alternative Belarusianness. Bekus writes about the film being banned in the official cultural space for explicit conflict to the foundational ideas of the official Belarusianness. Allegedly, the public fate of this movie is typical for the entire alternative Belarusianness that is ousted from the public space. But the latest developments have completely disproved these conclusions: the book "Struggle over Identity" was published on May 1, 2010, but in the summer same year the ban on screening the movie in Belarus was lifted. It was shown in cinemas, and moreover, broadcasted by the state television in

prime time. Kudzinienka himself has been a friend to Zamiatalin (director of "Belarusfilm") for several years now, and is clearly favoured by the state cinematography. Or, does this fact also reflect the condition of the Belarusian alternative culture?

In fact, the only example really fitting in the abovementioned interpretation of alternative culture is that of the "Free Theatre" as this project successfully speculates on its repressed status and promotion of the democratic and European ideals under the "conditions of dictatorship". Another example of alternative Belarusianness – the medieval reconstruction movement – rather destroys the image of the two warring camps, as it is not based on the logic of politics (government vs. opposition), has different origins and includes a variety of forms. It is, to a great extent, one of those "in between" phenomena upon which the Belarusian culture is mostly rested but which are often ignored by analytics trying to find a conflict and confrontation by any means possible. Nelly Bekus herself understands that the example of the reconstruction movement does not fit her criteria very well, but it does not make her give up the general scheme of the two discourses. Regretfully enough.

The book ends with description of the official politics of identity, which is presented through the standard signs: the "Slavianski Bazar" festival, the "Anastasija Sluckaja" movie, and public celebrations. Control over institutional resources allows the state to successfully implement its "national idea" which is based on the sense of belonging to the Belarusian people as a source of state sovereignty.

To sum it up, one should acclaim the publication of this book since generally an English-speaking reader can get very limited information of Belarus, both volume- and quality-wise. But in its essence, "Struggle over Identity" is rather a successor of those flaws in the body of Belarusian studies which Nelly Bekus mentions in the preface to her work. She is trying to articulate the points that have not yet been adequately perceived by many researchers (particular significance of the Soviet experience for formation of the Belarusian identity, inclusion of national interests into the foundation of the state ideology), but most of the basic schemes used by the author are clearly outdated and require critical revision. Most disappointing is the fact that the actual research part of the book (chapter 3), which examines the struggle of official and alternative versions of Belarusianness, is conceptually flawed and poorly outlined. Hopeful for a research that would open up new horizons, we have got a work that rather summarizes the critical moments in the study and representation of the Belarusian situation and is a strong argument for an urgent revision of this field.

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BELARUS, MECHANICS OF A DICTATORSHIP

Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature. Les petits matins, Paris, 255 pages.

"Belarus represents a typical case, a successful example of the suppression of democratic counter-governmental forces in a society; this is exactly what numerous rulers and not only ordinary dictators dream about"
— Lallemand et Symaniec (2007)

Jean-Charles Lallemand, b. 1973, is a Doctor of Political Sciences at Paris Institute of Political Studies, a researcher of Russia and Belarus, a co-editor of Perspectives biélorussiennes bulletin (together with Virginie Symaniec), an author of many articles on Belarus and Russia and a rare researcher from the French-speaking world who explores Belarusian elections as well as local and national authorities.

Virginie Symaniec, b. 1968, is a writer, a publicist, an artist, a theatre expert and a Doctor of Theatre Studies (Sorbonne, Paris), specializing in Belarusian culture, language and theatre. An author and a co-author of books on Belarus (Symaniec, 2003a; Symaniec, 2003b; Goujon et Symaniec, 1997), she is running a department of the *l'Harmattan publishing* house, which produces books about Belarus.

Belarus, mechanics of a dictatorship, written by a political scientist Jean-Charles Lallemand and a theatre researcher Virginie Symaniec, came to life as early as in 2007 almost unnoticed in Belarus. The bold name is probably the major reason, as it is unusual for Belarus to name books, especially political ones, like this. The lack of translation comes as another reason, as well as a popular opinion of Belarusian political researchers that the French view on politics in Belarus cannot suggest anything new or relevant. Quite the contrary, in France the book drew attention of the Eastern Europe and post-Soviet culture experts, as it was a first book targeting the political system of Belarus both in an analytical and publicist way.

Previously, the Belarusian topic had been predominantly covered by books on history, country, language or cultural studies (Goujon et Symaniec, 1997; Du Castel, 1997; Richard, 2002; Dépelteau et Lacassagne, 2003; Symaniec, 2003; Grandazzi et al, 2006; Drweski, 2002; Lapatniova, 2001; Goujon et al., 2001) or by general articles.

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Noteworthy, *l'Harmattan* publishing house and its special series on Belarus is the focal point for the Belarusian studies in today's France, including political studies. This series is publishing both books of Belarusian scientists working in France (many of them are former students of the French-Belarusian Department of the European Humanities University) and profound French researchers, e.g. Bruno Drweski, Virginie Symaniec, Alexandra Goujon, Jean-Charles Lallemand etc. Since the opening of the series in the late 1990s, about ten books on Belarus have been published.

Taking a consistent interest in Belarus, both Virginie Symaniec and Jean-Charles Lallemand visit the country on a regular basis to carry out surveys. Moreover, the young researchers have been engaged in editing the *Perspectives biélorussiennes* bulletin since 1996, a unique French-language project to cover politics and culture of today's Belarus. The authors' historical and anthropological expertise provided a solid foundation to support their analytical and critical approach.

One should also keep in mind that Virginie Symaniec is an expert in the history of the Belarusian culture and theatre, a particularly effective prism to understand the mentality and the political culture of Belarusians. Jean-Charles Lallemand has his own experience with Belarus too as an author of a publication (Lallemand, 2006) on the 2006 elections and the pre-electoral situation as well as mechanisms of the acting president's political survival. We believe this article deserves some special attention and a translation to Belarusian. Therefore, having different angles of expertise, both of the authors, however, had been well-equipped to write the book with their clear vision of the issue, the Cartesian rationality and the knowledge accumulated during their efforts with *Perspectives biélorussiennes*.

The authors' choice to name their work as "an essay" makes it easy to oppose the criticism from the point of "hard" classical political science, the ideal of which would be a bone-dry analysis, free of any publicist trends. By virtue of the genre, the book should not be subject to strict rules applicable for academic monographs. The French essay tradition (also in political field) is based on a rather liberal and, sometimes, very subjective interpretation of events as well as the style synthesis of science and journalism. This is exactly the case with the book by V.Symaniec and J.-C.Lalleman.

The essay is composed chronologically. The first chapter describes the attainment of independence and a period of fragile democracy when Belarusians, as the authors believe, actually touched democratic freedoms and had probably the first chance in the 20^{th} century to take part in free and democratic elections in 1994. Then a chapter on the emerging Belarusian authoritarian model and Mr. Lukašenka's antiparliamentarianism follows. The authors focus mostly on analysis of the roots of the fact, rather than its description, and come up with a number of explanations of the events (p. 14–15, 21).

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Both domestic (lack of civil society and, correspondingly, the weakness of parties and the opposition as a whole) and external reasons are mentioned: the Russian factor constantly appears as a permanent background of the paper.

In line with the Western democratic tradition, the human rights violations and the slow development of the local civil society constitute another focus of the paper. The French researchers are skeptical about the Belarusian government's declarations about their respect of human rights. No real human rights protection is possible without independent trade unions, movements and parties. The abovementioned institutions failed to emerge under Lukašenka's rule, something that makes statements on democracy obviously declarative. Asked by a French journalist during an interview *"How is the human rights situation developing for Belarusian citizens after 2007?"*, Virginie Symaniec responded: *"What kind of citizens?"* to stress that it is premature to talk about Belarusian *citizens* as long as basic civil rights are not secured (Symaniec, 2010).

Particularly interesting and offbeat looks the chapter on the presidential despotism and the state system of Belarus which is seemingly social and socialistic, but in essence is capitalism in its vicious version. In this chapter, Lallemand is taking a critical line on the presidential rule and highlighting threats of this model for fragile and inexperienced new democracies. Given the weakness of vital institutions, checks and balances, the fragile democracies usually degrade to authoritarianism if opt for the presidential model. The chapter "The non-existing social state" is backing the thesis about the illusiveness of socialism here, apparently replaced by a capitalistic model under the pressure of neighbouring Russia quite a few years ago (p. 16, 113–115).

The treatment of Lukašenka's regime as a dictatorship by the authors is also symptomatic (p. 13–16). Though unlike in classical cases, the President took the office through popular voting rather than putsch or coup, however, a classical monocracy with a strong vertical subordination came gradually to stay. Violence and suppression of the opposition along with intimidation of media, movements and parties, single courageous leaders, systematic arrests of oppositionists and electoral fraud all together constitute another feature of the dictatorship. Just as Latin American dictatorships of the 20th century, today's Belarus has experienced disappearances and abductions of people linked to opposition. Noteworthy, common references to "dictatorship" are quite conventional for the French political tradition; the situation is different in Belarus, as here the term of "dictatorship" has historical connotations and is used very cautiously, overwhelmingly in the oppositional discourse.

Besides, the essay is characterized by a relevant and interesting comparative perspective. The Belarusian realities are always put into a more general global, European or regional context. The despotic and conservative Belarus is not always an exception. The authors suggest taking a more critical and

open-minded glance on other states, first of all Russia, where a trend is noticeable towards a peculiar power usurpation in the hands of the president, the prime-minister and "Yedinaya Rossiya", a block created by them (p. 21). As Symaniec and Lallemand are stating in the preface, "*Belarus is not a Nazi Germany, or Stalin's USSR, or Pinochet's Chile, or military regime in Argentina, not even Miloševic's Serbia. The president of Belarus is not responsible for so many deaths as Putin's Russia implicated in Chechen war, however it is a dictatorship of one man who states independent of all parties*" (p. 13–14).

Even within the EU, some member states indicate features of a political culture similar to that of Belarus. For example, some members of Polish elites take a much more conservative stance on issues like sexuality, Christian values in politics etc. than Belarusians. The prime-minister of the democratic European Italy also controls almost all the media, and the state controls Internet-cafés, effectively limiting the access to the web. Therefore, the authors take a broad look on processes in Belarus and underline that to some degree they fit the pattern of international logics and certain trends on the world arena (p. 21–22).

For example, after 2001, numerous Western countries reinforced security policies, sometimes at the expense of democracy. This broad approach and the analysis of the Belarusian regime in the global context are new and very efficient, since they demonstrate dynamics and smartness of the regime, a "long-termed" or "sustainable" dictatorship, according to authors' definition. In addition, this approach testifies that, by Symaniec's apt remark, rather than being just a repeat or a reflection of the Soviet model, Lukašenka's regime represents a reactualization of this model and its application to the 21st centuty. The authors state that "*though having kept all Lenin's monuments*, Lukašenka's *regime is not just a self-repeating history […]. The regime is effective in juggling with the internet, cell phones and other technologies that promote the information flows within the society, and yet resorts to repressions against political actors and trade unions, businessmen and independent journalists on regular basis*" (p. 16, 229).

Here is where the regime and its ideologists are in the winning position, regardless of certain archaism of the economy and technologies: contrary to Russia and the EU, the official Minsk is not thinking in old colonial terms (the clash of the West and the East), the government is not treating Belarus as a periphery, quite the contrary, they are doing their best to argue that this is the centre of civilization and Europe. Lukašenka's regime does not need a national pro-European ideology as a base (he would not be capable of using it anyway because of his mental loyalty to the Soviet nation-free ideology). This is why authors find Lukašenka's policy consistent, since it has certain logics and ground under it, given geopolitical and, importantly, economic factors of life. Even the well-known diplomatic crisis of the 1990s should be viewed as

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a skillful instrumentalization of the diplomatic crisis for his own good rather than a simple mistake of a young and inexperienced dictator. Later on, the regime will demonstrate the same skill of making use of a crisis during the oil row with Russia (p. 167–168).

In such a manner, all chapters of the essay are covering different mechanisms of a rather sustainable real dictatorship, pretty well-integrated into the society and the state despite criticism. The political, economic and ideological mechanics constitute an organic well-functioning whole, like a mill, since Belarusians are not familiar with other kinds of mechanics, including democratic ones, so far.

In this regard, authors tend to be pessimistic in their scenarios, something they are not trying to conceal in the last chapter called "The enduring dictatorship". The enduring, or long-term dictatorship is working, because the whole system is on, all the mechanisms are functioning, since the state and the regime of Lukašenka do not understand any other model including democracy, so they operate for the good of their own authoritarian one. Rather than just an odd set of circumstances, the dictatorship is a purposeful project. The current strengths of this project are simultaneously its tomorrow's weaknesses.

In addition to the domestic situation (the lack of the civil society and, as a result, the lack of a democratic political culture), the international conjuncture is also contributing to the sustainability of the dictatorship: the economic crisis and the security boom are downplaying the image and the value of democracy, serving an excuse for a number of police-run measures. In the light of a certain antidemocratic sentiment arising from the economic downturn and stringent security policy, the future of the Belarusian dictatorship appears to be rather bright. The authors cannot identify or suggest any alternative to the current dictatorship so far.

The chapter on the Belarusian culture under authoritarianism also deserves attention. The general political trend of mobbing people, including the creative intellectuals, is made very visible by the example of the cultural situation (p. 221). As stated above, this trend fits the pattern of country's tough security measures, viewing many (primarily oppositionists) as potential enemies of the system. There is a point in a comparison of the official culture and language policy to that of General Pétain (p.226): just like the French dictator during the World War II, his contemporary Belarusian "counterpart" is suggesting a one-sided and an exceptionally traditionalistic vision of the culture and the language by means of moving the cultural policy to the channel of folklore and idolizing the notions of "race" and "people" (the French one for Pétain, the Belarusian and the Soviet one for us). Distorted and ideologized more than any other sciences, humanities end up totally exterminated before they manage to outgrow the Soviet clichés.

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Yet, unlike some Frenchmen, the authors of the paper deserve applauds for exercising an approach of decolonization in regard to e.g. the Belarusian proper names. The authors can feel the language situation in Belarus, not least because Symaniec is fluent in Belarusian. In quite a risky attempt, they decided to ignore the Russian-centered tradition of Belarusian names in official French. The authors noted in the preface that the proper names, e.g. that of the President, are spelled according to the Belarusian (Loukachenk**a**) rather than Russian (Loukachenko) transcription (p. 12). The researchers also used a non-academic form of the adjective "Belarusian" (**biélorussien** instead of **biélorusse**). According to the authors, the latter was created in the 40s as a Russian-inspired neologism (p. 12); however, the researchers recognize Belarus as a full-fledged successor of Ruthenia (Rus), thus they insist on the option of ***biélorussien***.

Interpreted exceptionally through French glasses, the paper suggests the best introduction to the Belarusian world possible for a French-speaking reader, as noted by "Le Monde diplomatique" (Biélorussie, 2007). Making every effort to address the lack of expertise on Belarus in the French audience, the authors provided a range of detailed explanations and biographical remarks, pictures and variety of comments, to make the text as understandable as possible. For that reason, the essay can seem too correct or sometimes too simple to a Belarusian reader and even more so to a Belarusian political scientist. I nevertheless find it is just as useful to experience the freshness of a glance from outside for the sake of new perspectives and unexpected remarks or dimensions of politics. A better understanding of mechanics of dictatorship today might help us out of it tomorrow.

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URBAN STUDIES AND THE ISSUE OF INNOVATIONS

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The book under review should be regarded as an expression of a relatively new trend in the academic environment, the essence of which is in the fact that the phenomena of cities and urban development become an increasingly popular subject, beyond the traditional studies of urban fabric in the stream of urban planning, architectural approaches and styles, archeological layers of cities, etc.

This trend of the last three decades is frequently referred to as a "spatial turn" or "return of spatial imagination" in social sciences and humanities. Its preconditions, as well as potential and already existent effects were thoroughly grounded historically and clarified in the late 1980s in a classical book of geographer and urban planner Edward Soja (1989).

Generalizing this new disciplinary disposition in a few sentences, it's worth to mention the three major innovations. Firstly, participation of representatives of various disciplines in the debates on functioning of urban systems significantly weakens the autonomy of the terms "city" and "space" in analytical schemes and theoretical models. Secondly, the weakening of autonomy implies that space (including the urban space) – is neither an effect, nor a reflection, and nor a container for social process, but one of the aspects of this process. In such case, interdisciplinary studies are necessary for the maximum versatile evaluation of the role of built environment in the common process of social transformations. Thirdly and finally, the increased sensitivity towards the city as a means of socio-spatial organization and the increasing number of research ventures on this issue require better grounded answers to the question of what is urban in relation to non-urban.

In traditional studies – institutionally and ideologically placed into the horizon of modernization – the city was usually opposed to the village and hence was constructed as a relatively discrete stage of development embodied in space. In the new system of knowledge, the city is regarded rather in the context of changing relations with the other methods of spatial organization: region, locality, nation-state, district within a city, territorial unit, world system, etc.

This somewhat expanded introduction is needed here in order to understand from what angle I suggest to regard the book "Post-Soviet Capital Cities:

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Minsk, Vilnius, Baku". It is difficult both to argue with this publication and to evaluate its significance from the point of view of one specific academic discipline. The authors themselves argue that their research is made "*on the crossing of sciences: sociology, political science, urban studies, partially architecture and psychology*" (p. 4), although it would be logical to include history here as well (Citarenka: 43–67; Šyrakanava: 67–100) and cultural studies (Zilinskaite: 207–217).

When getting acquainted with the book under review, a question of innovations and legitimacy of interdisciplinary urban studies arises. While the first part of the edition offers relatively consistent research schemes and purposes, the following three parts are composed of rather fragmented material, which rarely follows the theoretical purposes defined in the first part and, moreover, not always justifies the research findings postulated there (in case of this book, it is difficult to talk about research in singular).

The publication poses a question of the political role of capital cities in post-Soviet states (p. 7), while specificity of transformation of the "former political space" of these cities is formulated as the subject of the research (p. 6). At the same time, the publication lacks any distinct definition of political space (in relation to other types of space), as well as a categorical explanation of why the capital cities are qualitatively different from other types of settlements. Both terms are used rather descriptively and in an undisciplined manner, which makes their operationalization impossible. As a result, the use of the notions frequently remains on the level of non-critical knowledge in the vein of statements like: "*Capital is a political symbol of the nation and a 'cultural representation' of its society*" (p. 25).

> And further on: "A *capital city is always an implemented manifestation of political power. Being at the intersection of culture and power, the symbolic and the real in social life, incorporating the elements of sacred and urban architecture, a capital city creates, expresses and maintains not merely force and power, yet rather the collective identity, emerging under the impact of the force and power embodied in the city.* A *capital city shapes and demonstrates national identity ordered in a certain way which represents an identification of the city residents with their capital, perceived as an impressive symbolic embodiment of national self-consciousness, national people's pride" (p. 34).*

This passage shows that the authors of the book have certain difficulties with separation and coordination of the terms "political", "state" and "national". And these difficulties are aggravated by the necessity of the next step – coordination of these concepts with the category of "space". In this sense, the book suffers much from ignoring the results of previous studies on the peculiarities of capital cities (in relation to non-capital cities). Overlooked

is the variety of capital cities, which are very much different in terms of the organization of power, their role in nation-building, etc. The similarity of capitals' significance assumed in the book can be questioned by the examples of contemporary Berlin (in relation to Munich and Frankfurt), Warsaw (in relation to Kraków), Rome (in relation to Milano). These cities represent different modes of "capitalness", which are identified in the result of their comparison.

The authors work on the issue of political power with the same degree of descriptiveness and lack of sensitivity to significant distinctions. The question of specificity of the political structure of the three states under analysis is not really raised; the book merely assumes that the political power in the three analysed countries changed in 1990-1991. The main conceptual source for comparison between the Soviet and post-Soviet space is the idea of de-synchronization of a relatively homogeneous Soviet space after the collapse of the USSR (p. 4-5), with a reference to the article of N. Milerius from the book "P.S. Landscapes: Optics of Urban Studies" (Milerius, 2008).

The roots of the outlined shortcomings can be found in the article written by the coordinator of the research Göran Therborn, which presents the book's concept in a most abstract form. Therborn justifies the necessity of studying capital cities as a certain type, referring to the studies of global metropolises (carried out by Friedmann, Sassen and Taylor),[2] i.e. on the research perspective of urban political economy. At the same time, the authors of the book, at least Therborn himself, justify their own research project by criticizing the approach of urban political economy due to two main reasons. Firstly, this approach is concentrated exclusively on economic (here we should also add infrastructural) factors. Secondly, it distorts the city / state relation, underestimating the latter in its explanatory models (p. 16). As for the second point, it is necessary to point out that Therborn refers mainly to the earlier works on the issue of interrelations between city and state as two different forms of social organization, not touching upon later and more complex studies (for instance: Brenner, 2004; Sassen, 2007; Scott, 2005).

The first point of the criticism seems to be more important, yet more problematic. Therborn writes about a "meaningful built environment" as a base subject of urban studies (p. 17), which pretty straightforwardly refers to Weberianism and overlooks various interim discussions and arguments that made urban studies an interdisciplinary research area. The proposed approach presupposes a significant autonomy of culture (in this case, symbols and meanings) in the explanatory models of social change, and thus looses to the contemporary urban studies in sensitivity to spatial configurations, which deal not only with coding and decoding, but also with the issues of production and use of space.

[2] Namely: Friedmann, 1986; Friedmann, 1995; Sassen, 1991; Taylor, 2004.

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Remarkably, in Therborn's terms "*city is a built environment of certain size and density, with the boundaries that should not bother us*" (p. 17). The very fact of the lack of question about where a city ends and other forms of socio-spatial organization (region, village, district within a city, nation-state, etc.) start, as well as what they differ in, is another instance of a too mechanical interpretation of space. Working with the concept of city in this particular fashion, Therborn shows that spatial structures have a social meaning and carry political symbols. At the same time, he does not consider in what way the studies of capitals will be different from those of non-capital cities, weakly urbanized loci or the entire territories of nation-states, whose built environments also have social meaning and are included in the symbolic order of politics.

There is also an even more problematic point concerning justification of the research project in general. Urban studies are presented as opposing the city as either a locus or a focus of research (p. 14). Therborn regards this division overwhelming, although the essence of contemporary urban studies is defined precisely by the necessity to overcome this opposition, which was discussed already thirty years ago in a book by a Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (1980).[3]

Therborn writes that the book "Post-Soviet Capital Cities: Minsk, Vilnius, Baku" is directed to viewing a city precisely as a focus, literally – toward viewing "*cities as cities… as specific objects of research*" (p. 15). On the one hand, we should mention an insufficient precision and analyticity of this definition. On the other hand, it is necessary to say that the research presented in three chapters of the book only partially follow Therborn's orientation. Thus, Kabiak and Rubanaŭ (pp. 118-127), as well as Liebiedzieva (pp. 127-139) construct a city precisely as a locus of research.

An example of a successful attempt to work on the subject of a city from both perspectives is the article of A. Šyrakanava (pp. 67-100), which – to a certain degree together with the article of Zilinskaite (pp. 207-217) – seems virtually the only legitimate attempt in the book to work with the issues of urban dynamics in an innovative interdisciplinary perspective.

The articles can clearly be divided into groups. Firstly, there are compilations of already existing material on the issue, with minimal generalizations (Citarenka: 43–67; Vosyliute: 153–182). The last article uses the space for argumentation very uneconomically: the diverse data used in the text represents facts of different kinds, which are not really connected by a single reasoning line. What, for instance – according to the author's idea – do the survey results of Visaginas[4] youth in relation to their own city represent in

[3] It should also be noted that Therborn's discussion of this opposition as the key one for the project, with no reference to Hannerz's book, provokes certain questions.

[4] A city in North-East part of Lithuania – *ed.*

the article about Vilnius? Besides, the adherence to the approaches of Henri Lefebvre and Doreen Massey postulated in the introduction, remains absolutely declarative: the article does not interpret the development of Vilnius in the context of social changes. These changes are by default taken as a frame, into which "postcard stories" from the life of the city are simply inserted. Sometimes, the arbitrariness of the way in which historical examples are embedded into the ready-made theoretical schemes, goes beyond all limits. For instance, a passage from the English summary of the article by Vosyliute runs: "*The author describes the situation in 1610, when 4700 houses and 10 churches were burned out. This phenomenon demonstrated that medieval Vilnius represented a model of risk society. According to A. Giddens, the climate of risk and stability can often change, although the current population of modern societies are more secure than earlier. This concept relates to Vilnius*" (p. 218).

The second group of the articles represents studies with interesting conclusions, which, however, touch upon the issue of specificity of cities and urban environment only indirectly (Liebiedzieva: 127-139; Kabiak, Rubanaŭ: 118–127). For example, Liebiedzieva notes and tries to explain shifting from the "deficient consciousness" in the consumption practices of Minsk residents (Liebiedzieva: 127-139). It should be said that such articles lack comparative (Liebiedzieva; Kabiak, Rubanaŭ) or historical (Kabiak, Rubanaŭ) perspective as a base for interpretation of the received data, which leads to rather blurred line of argumentation. Thus, Liebiedzieva, who builds her research around the opposition of material / post-material orientations of consumers, writes: "*…As a rule, young residents of Minsk are more likely to accentuate post-material ideas and values in comparison to elderly ones*" (p. 131). At that, the English summary goes as follows: "*For example, the younger generation of Belarusians supports materialistic value orientations that differ from the patterns in Western European states*" (p. 151), although this issue is not raised in the article at all.

The third group of the articles is more (Hryščanka: 100–118) or less (Kasparaviciene: 192–207) successful attempts to describe the attitudes of Minsk and Vilnius inhabitants to their cities. Unfortunately, it is difficult to review these articles in detail due to the lack of research methodology and due to the lack of generated and operationalized concepts.

The articles of Rubanaŭ (pp. 139-149), Abdullaev (pp. 222-240), Faradov and Parfenova (pp. 244-256) can hardly be called academic ones. Rubanaŭ simply outlines the main provisions of the master plan and orientations for strategic development of Minsk, which does not make any sense without a comparative perspective and clarifications. This, and also Abdullaev's article (review of the history of Baku, which in its content resembles a tourist booklet), provoke a question about the target audience of this publication. In the latter case, uneconomical use of the text should also be noted: six pages out of

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seventeen are quotations of the speeches of builders, academics, bureaucrats and politicians at the round table dedicated to the problems of urban planning in Baku. Furthermore, some of the quotes from that round table can be found in the article by Faradov and Parfenova too.

The already mentioned article by Šyrakanava (pp. 67-100) discusses the issues of centralization and constant reconstruction of Minsk as the key features of the Belarusian capital, where "*an 'abolition' (Aufhebung in Hegelian terms) of the cultural specificity for the sake of formal (yet not neutral) language of the urban space takes place*" (p. 75). The article pays a lot of attention to toponymy as the most evident way of inserting the urban space into a broader symbolic order. Nevertheless, most of the article's conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the politics of memory of Belarusian authorities, without focusing on the phenomenon of city as such.

The author's argument about a relatively strong cultural influence of Minsk on the country's population with no analysis of the facts of this influence outside the capital is not quite clear. The potential for development of this thesis can be found in comparing Minsk to other Belarusian cities. Today, the Belarusian model of space utilization and functioning of the local authorities presupposes a considerable degree of similarity between national and city levels of decision-making. As a result, the capital city differs from other Belarusian cities rather in quantitative than qualitative terms.

Finally, rather descriptive articles of Zilinskaite (pp. 207-217) and Sayfutdinova (pp. 256-266), in accordance with the general idea of the book, discuss the tendencies of saturation of built environment of Vilnius and Baku with cultural meanings and, hence, allow us to find out something new about these cities.

Summing up, the authors write that analysis of the spaces of Minsk, Vilnius and Baku makes it possible to reconstruct three strategies of "*reorganization of space in capital cities*" (p. 26). In the case of Baku, it is the "*strategy of constructing a global city*" (p. 26); in the case of Vilnius, it is the "*European strategy*" (p. 28), and, in the case of Minsk, it is a combination of the rhetoric about heroic Soviet past of the World War II period and the independent present of the Belarusian nation (p. 37). It can be stated that only the formulation of the Minsk model is conceptual enough, and that specific research efforts are required for its generation. Besides, the very process of such generation can be found only in the second (the strongest of the three) part of the book, devoted namely to Minsk.

The conclusion on Vilnius (in the way it is presented in the book) does not require the work of three researchers. And for what reason the authors classify Baku as a global city – without discussing the studies of global cities and without (re)constructing the definitions – remains unclear. The strategy of building a global city is naively explained as an attempt to "*create (or*

maintain and strengthen) a contemporary image of the city, which would be in no way inferior to other 'global cities'. Buildings and monuments which can be considered as the new symbols of such cities are under construction: banks' headquarters become higher than cathedrals; the new infrastructure and space of the offices in the city center occupy the best locations; hotels and supermarkets have widely known names and are not different – in terms of service and offer – from similar 'world cities' in Europe, Asia and America" (p. 26).

It is indicative that in this fragment (same as in the articles about Baku), there is absolutely no data about the number of workplaces created with the help of the international capital, about the number of tourists visiting the city, and about the significance of the financial sector, while the word "airport" is never even mentioned. The comparison of Baku with Astana (but for some reason not with Vilnius) based on the fact that, according to the authors, "*business functions as a supranational subject of the power*" (p. 26), makes the situation even more confused. At the same time, an interesting and significant fact that Baku is currently developing without any master plan is not carefully and critically analysed in the perspective of the book's concept. This fact remains a social and political, but not a research problem. Here it would be promising to try to answer the question on how the specificity of Baku and its representation as the state capital (i.e. rather as the focus of research) correlates with the specificity of land utilization in the city (i.e. as rather in the locus of research) which is set by international players too. It would also be good to get the answers to the questions about how this influences and transforms its capital status or what actors and instruments (in the absence of the master plan) retain the city in the stream of symbolic representation of its nation-state.

In general, the postulated intention to compare the three capitals lacks both a conceptual prism and an actual effort. In many respects this problem occurs due to insufficient density of conceptualizations of urban environment, which results in the lack of an integral interpretative scheme of the authors. Besides, indicators which would make it possible to grasp the way in which symbolic ensembles found by authors in urban landscape influence human behavior and purposes are rarely discussed, although this influence is constantly supposed and postulated. In the majority of cases, the articles are too encyclopedic.

Based on the above, the book can be considered as an attempt to intensify the interest to the city as a subject of research. Yet it can also be attributed to a number of projects partially discrediting urban studies as field of complex interdisciplinary balance. In any case, it can hardly be called a solid and innovative product in the field of urban studies.

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Andžej Pukšto

GENTE LITHUANA, NATIONE LITHUANA

Dariusz Szpoper (2009). Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Arche. Gdansk, 487 S.

TWO DECADES AGO, A HISTORIAN OF LITERATURE, professor of Jagellonian University Tadeusz Bujnicki, whose family has its roots in the Lithuanian – Latvian borderland, in the publication "Znad Wilii" called the territory of the historical Grand Duchy of Lithuania a "forgotten continent" *(zasypany kontynent)*. In this way he stressed a need for complex, often interdisciplinary joint studies of its unique heritage by Lithuanian, Polish, Belarusian and Ukrainian researchers. The collapse of the Soviet empire has made archival documents more accessible and state borders have become easier to cross. It has also brought some other advantages that could not be enjoyed in the past.

In the early 1990s, the Polish academic circles came up with a lot of initiatives aimed at studying the Polish, Polish-Lithuanian or Polish-Belarusian heritage outside modern Poland. Unfortunately, only a few of those projects have been carried out ever since. It looks like the Poznań circle, developed in the 1980s by Jerzy Ochmański and then Jan Jurkiewicz, Grzegorz Błaszczyk, Krszysztof Pietkiewicz et al., has gone into decline, though I would prefer to be mistaken here. On the other hand, new initiatives are arising. Being just as valuable, they are making a more and more tangible contribution to the development of historiography.

At Gdańsk University, law historian Dariusz Szpoper has been actively studying for years the development of political thought in Lithuania and Belarus in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

For the last decade, apart from the monograph that is mentioned here, he has published three works on Polish political thought in Lithuania and Belarus (Szpoper, 1999; Szpoper, 2003; Szpoper and Bielecki, 2001). While the personality of Alexander Miejsztowicz has been more or less familiar to both scholars and the general public, Konstancja Skirmuntt is much less known in Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. Her cousins Roman and Konstanty Skirmuntts have been much more "popular" with researchers.

So it should be pointed out that Dariusz Szpoper has addressed a little-known personality, discovering a lot of new archival documents and thus reminding us about some pages of the social and political life of the Polish – Lithuanian – Belarusian borderland of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which were covered with a thick layer of dust. Considering that the person the book is dedicated to spoke Polish, its mere title is thought-provoking.

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It hints that the author is going to represent an unusual figure, who cannot be easily inscribed in the context of today's history course books and even some monographs.

From the very first pages, Dariusz Szpoper encourages his readers, even if they are well-aware of the turns of political history in the western provinces of the Russian Empire and the history of Lithuanian and Belarusian national revivals, to think what author of the monograph on Konstancja Skirmuntt in his unique way shows through the actions of one social writer and public figure the period when the modern national states were coming into being, how "crowded" these states were and how a group of intellectuals, who called themselves "the last citizens" of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, actively sought for super-national formulas about a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago.

Unlike Alexander Miejsztowicz, Konstancja Skirmuntt rarely attended political salons. She was not a frequent visitor at influential figures' houses in Minsk (Miensk), Warsaw, Vilnius (Vilnia) or Kaunas (Koŭna). In a wheelchair for more than a decade, Konstancja Skirmuntt spent most of her life in Pinsk, a town dominated by Jews and surrounded by unique landscapes of Paliessie with its picturesque estates, whose owners did not stay away from anti-imperial activities even at the hardest times that began in 1864. The author of "Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana" very precisely, sometimes even in too many details restores the atmosphere of that world of landowners.

It should be remembered, however, that towns played a much less significant role in the political and cultural life of Russian provinces in the 2nd half of the 19th century than in Galicia or Transylvania, to say nothing of Western Europe. Pinsk had suffered mainly from the vacuum that was left when the Jesuit College, naturally associated with Adam Naruszewicz, had been closed down and the Order of Jesuits had stopped its work. It has to be regretted that the author did not show a wider picture of social and cultural life in this distinctive region. It has not been completely eradicated from general history or world culture course books, in spite of the historical turmoil of the 2nd half of the 20th century, which is, unfortunately, still going on. Suffice it to say that Pinsk and its suburbs figure in the biographies of well-known Jewish public figures, including the founder of the Zionist organisation "Mizrachi" Rabbi Yitzchak Yaacov Reines and the first President of Israel Chaim Weizmann and Prime Minister Golda Meir. Ryszard Kapuściński was also born in 1932 in Pinsk, where he lived until he was eight.

Konstancja Skirmuntt, who Dariusz Szpoper has dedicated his research to, did not stay away from crucial political processes. Unlike her mother, a well-known in the 19th century and undeservedly forgotten in Poland and Lithuania artist and sculptor Helena Skirmuntt, Konstancja did not have an opportunity to visit a lot of European capitals, Dresden, Florence or Milan. Nevertheless, her social writings and views openly aired in the press made

Konstancja Skirmuntt a personality whose ideas were widely debated and had a certain influence on different social groups. Her long-lasting correspondence with Eliza Orzeszkowa and the leaders of the Lithuanian national revival Jonas Basanavičius and prelate Adomas Dambrauskas-Jakštas proves that she was very active as a social writer.

At the time of the Russian Empire, Konstancja Skirmuntt boldly aired her views in “Kraj”, which was published in St. Petersburg, as well as the Vilnius-based “Kurier Litewski”, “Gazeta Codzienna” and a pro-Lithuanian paper “Litwa”. She also debated with the Warsaw-based “Kurier Polski”. In the interwar period, her publications, polemics and notes could be found in the conservative Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz’s “Słowo”, which seldom favoured her, and ideologically close to her “Przegląd Wileński”.

Konstancja Skirmuntt was not completely forgotten by contemporary researchers. The highly popular Lithuanian Encyclopaedia that came out in Boston after the Second World War published a biographical note on her (Konstancya..., 1963:55). Historiographers assessed the role of books on history by Konstancja Skirmuntt in shaping Lithuanian identity. They were written in a highly romantic style, which modern readers may even find funny, but it made them no less popular a hundred years ago or so.

In her research “Renowned Women in Lithuania: from the 16th to the First Part of the 20th Centuries”, Aniele Butkuvienė discusses Konstancja Skirmuntt and her mother Helena Skirmuntt in a detailed article (Butkuvienė, 2007). Lithuanian historian Rimantas Miknys, a well-known researcher of the political thought of the early 20th century, in his articles has more than once drawn attention to Konstancja Skirmuntt’s role in the development of the local patriots’ circles. The author of the monograph should have taken into consideration the works by the Lithuanian authors, as well as a number of other works by Lithuanian historians on the national revival. At the same time, highly valuable correspondence of Stanislava Paškevičienė, editor of the Aušra, the main periodical of the Lithuanian revival movement of the late 19th century, in Polish, which Dariusz Szpoper found at Vilnius University library, would have added to the intriguing air of the monograph. Similarly, the reader could expect a wider background picture concerning landowners’ stance at the Polish – Lithuanian or Polish – Belarusian borderland in the late 19th – early 20th centuries.

Although the author has already provided answers to a lot of questions concerning the actions of the conservative circles, in his “Successors to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania” (Sukcesorzy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego), it still seems a must to offer a consistent comparison of Konstancja Skirmuntt’s position with that of other pro-Lithuanian landowners, such as Bolesław Jałowiecki, Stefanija Jabłońska or Otton Zawisza. This is even truer of Stanisław Narutowicz and Michał Romer, who, regretfully, figure minimally in the monograph. Although in her letter to Jonas Basanavičius Kon-

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stancja Skirmuntt called herself "the last of the Mohicans", in her feelings of divided Lithuanian-Polish loyalties, she was by no means the only one to find a place for herself in neither Polish nor Lithuanian political structures. In this context, the author should have mentioned landowners' letter to Antanas Smetona, published in the early 1920, where the authors declared their willingness to help the young Lithuanian Republic.

The "old Lithuanian" Józef Piłsudski with his dilemmas concerning the domestic and international policies of the revived Poland, who is more often referred to in the monograph, or the undeniable leader of Vilnius Lithuanians Mykolas Biržiška, considering that he came from the family of the gentry, would have helped a great deal in explaining such an unusual phenomenon as *gente Lithuanus, natione Lithuanus*. In this way the author could have spared the reader plenty of "dense" quotations two or three pages long without paragraphs, even though they are taken from highly valuable documents and unknown archival sources.

In spite of all the shortcomings, I strongly recommend reading Dariusz Szpoper's book, which will be of particular interest to researchers of the Lithuanian, Polish and Belarusian political thought of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It probably reveals a lot of new facts from the history of landowners of the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a social group whose merits were consistently underrated during the Soviet period in all Eastern Europe. The book is another disproof of a statement, which grew into a myth as early as during the interwar period and is still quite often found among researchers, that landowners on the territories of modern Lithuania, Belarus or Ukraine were deeply pro-Polish and strongly opposed the national revival of the peoples that they lived side by side with.

Konstancja Skirmuntt's position is another reminder that at the beginning of the 20th century, the idea of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the deeply rooted tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had a long-lasting potential. Her outlook was only partially grounded in the romanticism of the glorious history, but first and foremost it was shaped by a deeply thought-out understanding of nation-building processes at the Belarusian-Lithuanian-Polish borderland due to a firm belief in a civilising mission attributed to the 1385 and 1569 Unions, as well as super-religious and political role played by the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe.

Konstancja Skirmuntt boldly aired her views not only in Vilnius, but also in Warsaw, though her circles found them too pro-Lithuanian. She pointed out in the conservative "Kurier Polski" that "*national differences combined with political unity, the development of our own individualities combined with inseparable brotherly links, a fight against both Polish and Lithuanian chauvinism basing on healthy national patriotism and deep Christian feelings are the principles that I adhere to. I hope they will be shared by all my Lithuanian*

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brothers, when they get rid of the chauvinist fever, to leave only sincere and pure patriotism, which is from God. However, for this long-awaited moment to come, our older Polish brethren in the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania should not defer it with their actions."

Although Konstancja Skirmuntt did not know the Lithuanian language, she considered herself a Lithuanian, on the grounds that the language criterion should never be decisive or one of the main rules in determining national identity. As she explained to Warsaw-based readers, "*I belong to the Lithuanian element which is alive and active all the time, not only among common people, but also among the gentry, on the land of Vitaŭts and Gedymins. Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana.*"

Dariusz Szpoper succeeds in revealing the atmosphere of Polish-Lithuanian language disputes in the public life of Lithuania and the writer's involvement in those complicated arguments. (It has to be regretted that the author was unable to use the Lithuanian press).

The book also contains the forgotten correspondence between Konstancja Skirmuntt and Mieczysław Dowojna-Sylwestrowicz, which showed big differences of opinion. The latter published Polish-language periodicals in Vilnius, including the abovementioned "Litwa", but at the same time his goal was to spread the idea of studying and beginning to speak Lithuanian among the gentry, sometimes even by forceful methods. A careful reader will notice, among other things, an unusual exchange with Marjan Zdziechowski and Ludwik Abramowicz, whose role in settling the Polish – Lithuanian or Polish – Belarusian conflicts just before the First World War and in the interwar period can hardly be overestimated.

Konstancja Skirmuntt thought that without landowners' involvement, the Lithuanian nation-building process was doomed. Her correspondents Jonas Basanavičius and Adomas Jakštas did not agree with such an opinion, arguing that this social group had distanced themselves too much from Lithuanian society and betrayed the Lithuanians. In their opinion, only deep remorse for Polonisation that followed the Union of Lublin and a sincere desire to learn Lithuanian, combined with full commitment to the cause of national revival could bring back "the young generation of magnates" to the Lithuanian people.

Dariusz Szpoper reminds that for Konstancja Skirmuntt, the Unions of Kreva and Lublin were a historical necessity, which the Grand Duchy of Lithuania benefited from considerably, getting engaged in the western Christian civilisation. She had a high opinion of Gedymin, Alhierd, Kiejstut, Vitaŭt[1] and, of course, Jahajla (Jagiełło), who had not only maintained his father's and grandfather's achievements, but also given them a broader new

[1] Lithuanised names of GDL dukes – Gediminas, Algirdas, Kęstutis, Vytautas, – are more spread in the English language literature.

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dimension. In 1910, Konstancja Skirmuntt called upon political figures and intellectuals in Warsaw and Krakow to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the battle of Grünwald in close cooperation with Lithuanians. She supposed that Polish-Lithuanian cooperation, based on Catholic faith, had always been a historical necessity, which Russian political thought would forever oppose.

Guided by these principles, at the beginning of 1920 Konstancja Skirmuntt sent a letter of protest to Józef Piłsudski in connection with the occupation of Vilnius (Viĺnia) and Vilnius region by the Polish army and the establishment of the Civil Government over the eastern territories. This matter is little known to historians, so I believe the letter should have been published in its full form in the Appendix.

"There is no Lithuania without Viĺnia, which like a dear 'sister', with its lands and peoples once gave Poland a status of a superpower in merging with it. Today, it has nothing left of its glorious past except Viĺnia, its symbol of legacy. [...] For the sake of healthy politics, Poland should not claim Viĺnia. Then the main issue for dispute between the two nations will disappear, and the old union will flourish in its new forms," said Konstancja Skirmuntt to the head of the Polish state in her letter, published in the Polish-language "Echo Litwy", a paper of Vilnius/Viĺnia Lithuanians.

In spite of her poor health, Konstancja Skirmuntt worked hard when the Middle Lithuania was incorporated in Poland, commenting on topical political issues, even though the events took a different turn from what she had hoped for. In his monograph, Dariusz Szpoper often quotes Konstancja Skirmuntt's previously unknown work called "In Connection with the Text of Lithuanian Demands, Presented to the Polish Government by the Delegation of the Lithuanian Government in the Second Half of December 1920 in Warsaw."[2]

After her disappointment with the actions of Polish politicians in Warsaw and Vilnius, Konstancja Skirmuntt was just as disappointed with the decisions taken in Kaunas, which was at the time the capital of the Lithuanian Republic. Her deepest regret was the Lithuanian–Soviet Treaty of July 12, 1920. No less critical was she of the guidelines of an agrarian reform passed by the Lithuanian Parliament. Konstancja Skirmuntt called on the Lithuanian Government "*not to hurt the Lithuanian gentry by confiscating more land from them than the country really needs and by confiscating it without any payment.*" She labelled the reform an "*erroneous twist of social theory.*" When the Province of Vilnius was set up, Konstancja Skirmuntt became an outspoken critic of the Polish government's policies towards the Lithuanian and Belarusian national minorities in Viĺnia (Vilnius) region and their rights and freedoms.

[2] The original title is, "Uwagi z powodu tekstu żądań Litwy, przedłużonych rządowi polskiemu przez delegację rządu litewskiego w drugiej połowie grudnia 1920 roku w Warszawie".

The author of the monograph presents Konstancyja Skirmuntt's highly versatile public and literary activities in five chapters, called "The Paths of Life. A Biographical Sketch against the Background of the Epoch", "The Tradition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Birth of Ethnic Lithuania", "Attempts to Find a Compromise and Modernise the Public Life of the North-western Provinces", "The Reality of the Polish Revival and Together with the Catholic Church". For some reason, a chapter on the Belarusian question is not included in the monograph. Fortunately, the author does not completely ignore the issue, and the Pinsk landowner's attitude to the Belarusian revival can be traced on some pages.

Despite a number of critical remarks, it has to be unequivocally admitted that Dariusz Szpoper's book has brought back from oblivion a unique personality, whose intellectual legacy we are going to address more and more.

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EDITORIAL LANGUAGE POLICY AND TRANSLITERATION PRINCIPLES

There is no fixed tradition of reproducing Belarusian names and place names in the English-language literature. This is due to a complex of historical and cultural reasons, but the growth of publications about Belarus and the further development of Belarusian Studies requires a more accurate standardization. Belarusian Political Studies Review adheres to the following rules:

Belarus and Belarusian

The English texts contain different spelling options - Byelorussian, Belorussian, Belarusian etc. We only use the official name and the corresponding derivatives: Belarus, Belarusian. This rule also applies to the institutions and objects that used the words “Belarus”, “Belarusian” in the past. Thus, we use Belarusian SSR, not Byelorussian SSR.

Place Names

BPSReview adheres to the standard of the corresponding instruction approved by the Government in 2007 (transliteration from Belarusian according to the rules of the national Latin alphabet, see below). The standard was also recommended for the use by the international community.

The proposed system is very close to the traditional Belarusian Latin alphabet developed in the ninetieth and twentieth centuries, and is thus the most legitimate one from the legal, cultural and historical point of view.

Other place names are usually transliterated from the language of the country in which the designated places are currently located, taking into account, where possible, the national transliteration rules and the symbols of national alphabets.

Names

Proper names follow the same rules as place names.

It should be noted that in the English-language literature, transliteration from the Russian language or passport writing (with no diacritical marks) are also used.

Given the large number of existing systems and their contradictory nature, in our opinion, the use of a single standard both for names and place names is the only correct way out. In the most significant cases, double writing is provided.

The names of Belarusian authors in the contents and in the beginning of the articles are provided both according to the national Latin and passport spelling. Belarusian Cyrillic writing is also available.

In the list of references, the names of Belarusian authors are provided in the national Latin writing. If a source was published in Russian, then transliteration from the Russian language is provided in brackets "[ ]" (only ASCII characters).

Newspaper Names

The names of newspapers are given in accordance with the rules of the original language. Belarusian Latin alphabet is used for the Belarusian names, while transliteration from the Russian language is used for the Russian ones.

Organization and Party Names

The names of Belarusian organizations (organizations that are registered in Belarus or for which Belarus is the main country of activities) are provided from the Belarusian language.

Abbreviations for organizations are also derived from the Belarusian language: BNF (Bielaruski Narodny Front), but not BPF (Belarusian Popular Front).

The names of other organizations are provided in the language of the country of main activities.

Other Cases

Specific concepts or words that have no English analogues (e.g. "Kryvija") are provided with the help of the Belarusian Latin alphabet.

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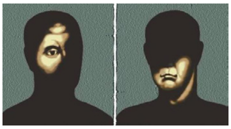
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